

SURFING LIFE

MADE FROM SURFING

OWEN
WRIGHT

AN INTERVIEW WITH
YOUR 2015 WORLD
CHAMPION*

*WELL IT'S EITHER GOING TO BE
HIM OR MICK, OR JULIAN, OR TAJ,
OR KERRY. LET'S BE HONEST

INTRODUCING
SPACE
BOIEE,
SURFING'S
INTERGALACTIC
SAVIOUR

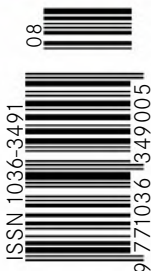


PHOTO: ANDREW SHIELD

OVER THE EDGE

EXPLORE AUSTRALIAN SURFING'S WILD FRONTIERS

TACKLING SHIPSTERN'S WITH THE TASSIE BOYS | NORTH WEST OZ AS TOLD BY RY, CLAY AND KERBY
DION ATKINSON'S GUIDE TO SURVIVING SOUTH AUSTRALIA
NEW SOUTH WALES' SOUTH COAST



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LIKE WEARING NOTHING

MIRAGE

THE ULTIMATE BOARDSHORT

SURFING
IS EVERYTHING



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WEARS MIRAGE AGGROGAME



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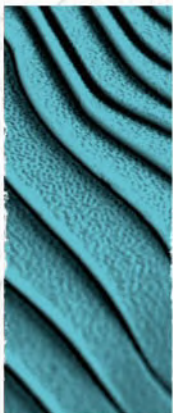
Skeleton Coast Boardshort
Jordy Lawler





THE REEF ROVER WORN BY **SHANE DORIAN**

JUST PASSING THROUGH



SWELLULAR TECHNOLOGY

FEATURED IN THE REEF ROVER

THE SEA IN EVERY STEP





"It's not easy down here. It's hardcore. There's no one here. If you get lonely, if you don't like too much of your own company, or if you want to tune chicks, party or meet new people... it's not for you. You have to give up a lot of stuff to stay here. You have to make sacrifices. It's remote, it's quiet, and there's not many people around, let alone surfers. I just want to keep on surfing these waves and hiding out. I don't want to take on life with a job or a family just yet, that's not for me right now. I can't think of anything else I want to do."

There's no one in Australia, surfer or non-surfer, who embodies life on the fringe more than our mate Camel, now residing 'somewhere' in the South Australian desert. Here he takes a leisurely paddle-in drop in the 'big smoke', Western Australia's Cow Bombie, that eventually scored him \$5000 in the Surfing Life Oakley Big Wave Awards.

Photo: Jamie Scott



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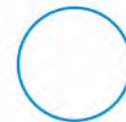
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STANDARD LEASH



NAKED LEASH

The leash also features the patented Triple Swivel Technology which has been designed to reduce the spaghetti effect of conventional leashes.



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4D-FLEX MOULD

Triple Swivel



4D-FLEX MOULD

TRIPLE SWIVEL

Designed with the highest grade stainless steel material on the market. The Triple swivel is situated at both ankle strap and railsaver ends of the leash.

ELLIPTICAL URETHANE CORD

The elliptical shape of the high strength urethane (Bayer) has been designed to breach the surface, and skip across the water surface to create less drag.





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A return to Title form from the lanky beast



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Easy to get to, hard to get away from



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He's the SUP destroying hero that we need

REGULARS

014 542 WORDS
018 MOMENTS
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096 OBJECTIFY ME
100 THE WIRE
110 THANKS FOR COMING

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COVER SHOT



SURFER: Owen Wright
PHOTO: Andrew Shield
Owen Wright is a man who revels in pushing himself over the edge, over any ledge, wherever they may rear up and threaten to pulverise lesser men. He's also Australia's latest and greatest World Title hope. Bonza.



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lost



The insignificance of a significant man, Tasmania.
PHOTO: STU GIBSON

MEET THE FRINGELINGS

Life begins at the fringes. Real life; life unfettered by social conventions and interference by the 'man'. Out on the edges of society you are free to do as you want, hemmed in by only the wild environment and the few like-minded fools who dare take on these wild expanses with you. If you're not on the edge you're taking up too much space...

This is going to be a real cliché-arama.

But the fringes aren't for everyone. They're not for me – I like the city. I crave the interaction of people, the action when humanity is crammed into a small space, where the social arms race forces everybody to excel! Sure, the crowds frustrate me in the surf, but that's a trade-off that I'm willing to make to be stimulated out of the water. Call me nuts, but I'd rather New York City to hanging off the edge of Shipsterns Bluff. I call those guys nuts.

That's the beauty of surfing and its diversity. There is not one particular 'surfy' type, nor is there one right way to pursue the sport. Surfers who live in the city are just as much surfers as

those who live on the fringes. They're as worthy of the denomination as surfers who live in the middle grounds, and they as much as those with long hair and lawyers and dole bludgers and military men and lesbians. Surfing is the act of going to the beach and riding a wave on a surfboard: where you do it and what you do when you're not riding the wave doesn't play into, or against, your right to call yourself a surfer.

This was what we wanted to cursorily cover in our Australiana series. We started in Australia's main urban-surf sprawl, the Gold Coast. Hardly a bustling metropolis, but as close a combination of city and shred as one'll find. From there we meandered amongst the middle lands, the once-core surf towns that have suffered from seachange gentrification, and now we find ourselves on the fringes.

For the purposes of this magazine the fringes of Australian surfing are those areas where only the wildlings roam. The edges of the surfing conversation; places where men and women surf away from the surf

industry's cheque books and the surf media's exploitative lenses and dictaphones. These are the places where après-surf activities are thin on the virgin, verdant ground, but where oceanic opportunities abound; a purer place to surf, perhaps, if we're just talking about that hallowed act of sliding sideways atop a pocket of aquatic energy.

The men and women featured in this magazine don't hold a greater claim to being a surfer than you or I, but they do exert more effort in the pastime's pursuit. For the surfers featured in this magazine, getting a wave takes more than merely rolling down to the carpark, grabbing a latte from the kiosk and, maybe, pulling on the three-b'-two. This is surfing that takes commitment; it takes grit. These guys might not earn any greater right to call themselves surfers than anyone else, but they do deserve accolades for their commitment, and for the boundaries that they continue to push.

This is the fringe of Australian surfing, and it's where life begins.

- Wade Davis

HAVE NO FEAR WELL, MAYBE A LITTLE, AND HOPEFULLY SOON.

It's that time of year once again. Mark Mathews has rounded up his team of heavy surf loonies and they sit, poised, awaiting the right swell, the right winds, the right tides and enough time between forecast and competition day to kick Red Bull Cape Fear into action. With a 16-strong roster of local heroes and international stars – Mark, Dingo, Hippo, Jack Robbo, Richie Vas, Russell Bierke, Jesse Pollock, Evan Faulks, Laurie Towner and Koby and Jai Abberton, Makua Rothman, Albee Layer, Jamie O'Brien and Ian Walsh – a unique competition format, combining both tow

and paddle-in, and the kind of live webcast that only energy drink money can afford, it's something you're not going to want to miss.

Surfing Life dig the Cape Fear contest. It's got a unique mix of heavy water, huge personalities and pointy rocks (and the very real possibility that the heavy water will push these huge personalities onto the pointy rocks) that makes it a wildly entertaining prospect. Let's not forget that our east coast has been pretty damn active in the early half of 2015. We'd wager that this year is the one that's going to nail the right conditions

and blow the contest, and some unsuspecting competitors, out of the water.

But what happens when it *doesn't* all come together? When one ingredient of the competition cocktail is missing and Mark isn't authorised to push the big red button? Well, the boys go surfing, just as they normally would, and score pumping waves with hardly any fanfare. Let's let the eastern suburbs' finest, and Cape Solander aficionado, Billy Morris, explain.

"This was probably the best day so far this year. Mark definitely wanted to call the event on, but by



📷 BILLY MORRIS ✍️ RYAN JONES 🕒 9:34AM 4TH JUN 2015

the time the forecast was upgraded, only a couple of days out, there wasn't enough time to pull the whole thing together, it was too late. The swell itself was a little south; with a touch more east it would have been better, actually epic. But there were definitely still some crazy ones. It was one of the better joint paddle and tow days in the six to eight-foot range that I've seen."

And what of those aforementioned pointy rocks? Were there any bodies or egos bruised? That's what the public wants, Billy, blood! We want blood!

"It was a perfect day, actually. There were no real dramas besides the usual heavy wipeouts. Everyone seemed to survive unscathed. The usual suspects were having a real dig: Mark, Evan Faulks, Sam Macintosh, Richie Vas, Koby Abberton, Jesse Pollock. There were a few guys filming and shooting stills from the rocks, but it was actually quiet as far as water shooters go. But everywhere was going off on this day, Shark Island was perfect on the morning high tide! All in all it was a magic day of solid waves."

Magic indeed! I mean, just look at this barrel

Mark sits snugly inside. It's perfect! It almost looks manageable for a normal, sane human being that works at a surfing magazine (quit showing us up, Sam Mac, would you!?). Fingers crossed for more perfect conditions over the next couple of months and a forecast allowing enough time for Mark to get this crazy show on the road. Gosh, maybe it's all happened between the time we sent this baby to print and the time you're reading. How embarrassing!? If not, however, make sure you stay tuned to redbullcapefear.com until it's run and won.







TO HOLD OR TO FOLD

📷 STU GIBSON ✍️ NICK CARROLL
🕒 4:48PM 15TH JUN 2015

What the fuck am I doing here? It's a question that's faced all surfing's world champs, and none has dealt with the answer in quite the same way. Each of them has moved on, or struggled to, pugnaciously, angrily, calculatingly, in denial, in grief, in apparent grace, in quiet desperation. But not once has it been easy. How the hell can it, when you've built the best years of your life around this thing you discovered as a kid and which has since elevated you to the absolute heights of achievement? The rush of combat, the hailing by your peers, the crazy highs of title wins at Pipe and 10-point rides at Chopes? How do you let go of stuff like that? For a couple of years now Kelly Slater's been building a bridge toward a life after competition, or at least that's what it looks like: the new clothing line, the stakes in the surfboard company and the purveyor of healthy energy foods, the screenplay option, all seemingly ready-made to help absorb some of his restless flickering intelligence. Who knows – in the back of his mind he may already have a timeline, beyond what he pointedly told the WSL web team before Fiji ("I'll either win or I'll quit"). Only a fool would have no exit strategy, and KS ain't no fool. But that means he's got one foot in and one foot out, which can't help but feel uncomfortable as hell. And all the planning in the world doesn't prepare you for this moment: in the channel, sucking up a low-point loss to a Brazilian supergrommet, world title dreams fizzling on the reef, while other guys are scoring 10s at will. What the fuck am I doing here? There's only one answer. Even if you're the greatest surfer of all time.



CLIFTON JAMES HOBGREAT

📷 STU GIBSON ✂️ WADE DAVIS 🕒 5:16PM 16TH JUN 2015

"I've got my phone in my pocket!" screamed CJ as he jumped in the water for what was to be his last ever round-one heat at the Fiji Pro. As Cliff, wearing Kelly's lucky number 11 jersey, theatrically groped to the back pocket of his boardshorts, the webcast team did a convincing job of hamming up the moment. Something's going on here? What's he saying? Why's he wearing Kelly Slater's jersey? and so on. He didn't have his phone in his pocket, he was just being the classic dad-joke joker that we've always known CJ to be, and the webcast team knew this, and they knew why.

After the heat, which he lost to Gab-Mo and J-Flo, CJ announced his retirement to Todd Klein and the webcast-glued receptacles of surfing spectacles. He said, "At Bells, Kelly was joking around on Instagram and had said that he was retiring, and when I saw him in Bells I was like, Hey, I really am retiring this year Kelly, and I'd be stoked to wear your jersey. What do you think? And he was like *Yeah, yeah, that'd be rad!*" So that's just what he did.

"I've been able to be on this Tour for 17 years," CJ said to the world through Todd Klein's microphone, "and I'm stoked to be able to thank

everyone that's been there for me on this great ride. I want this to be my last year in a jersey, ever. I don't ever want to wear a jersey again."

We, the receptacles, spat our tea/energy drinks at our computer screens and said, What? How? Why? And once the shock had passed we tempered our response to End of an era, and the like. CJ had been on Tour for 17 years, was both a perennial threat in lefts of consequence and the winner of the 2001 World Title Light*. What was he thinking!? Surely he could muster a few more laps around the world title circuit! What kind of brave new world are we entering if our future is Hobgood free? I mean, we used to have two of the suckers for heck's sake. (CJ is a renowned God botherer, and so, out of respect, I've opted for a curse-free diatribe in his honour.)

The decision makes sense for CJ's legacy, calling it quits before the rankings did it for him. CJ was gifted last year's injury wildcard, after butterflyflying his foot in Portugal, but this year has failed to beat a single person (a trend that continued in Fiji – it seems Jules ain't got no time for sentimentality). He's a combination of over it, psychologically, and

over it, the hill. The game's changing, perhaps more rapidly now than ever given Kelly's relinquishing stranglehold on the sport. This is no place for old men, and men who revel exclusively on rail and in pit are exponentially ageing in the world of competitive surfing.

But that doesn't make CJ's game any less beautiful, nor his legacy less enduring. Like the twilight saturating this image in warmth, thus will be CJ's swansong on Tour. He might not win another heat, but his humour and mentorship will shine brighter than ever; his experience a reminder to those of us who are quick to discard the old for the new that there is still real value in experience, and lessons to be learnt from history. For competitors and fans alike, there will be a real value in ruminating on CJ's career over the next six events, as such longevity doesn't occur by chance. Shine on, Clifton the Great.

*The September 11 terrorist attacks cut that season short to a mere five events, out of concerns for the athletes' safety in a changing, more dangerous world. One has to consider just how highly surfers rank on the terrorists' list of targets.

LIKE CLOCKWORK

📷 CHRISTOPHER PEEL ✍️ RYAN JONES
🕒 4:16PM 5TH JUN 2015

There are a few certainties in this crazy old world of ours: death, taxes, you'll always damage a new board on its first surf, the sequel is never better than the original (except *Terminator* and *The Godfather*, duh!) the hot girl from high school will be pregnant by the time she's 19 and, of course, pumping surf in Indonesia during our winter months.

Usually there are a couple of early or shoulder season bombs that light up the archipelago, but this year it stuck to the classic format; small-to-fun-size waves with light and variable winds throughout March, April and May and then, in the first week of the southern-hemi winter, boom! A nice, big purple blob and a shift to tradewind conditions.

We're sitting on endless idyllic Balinese line-up shots following this swell; lines upon lines looking north through Impossibles, Padang and up to Ulus... and let's not even mention the perfection we have gracing our inboxes of spots further east, west and north (you'll find out all about that in the very next issue of *Surfing Life*). But you know what? Sometimes you just have to run a shot of a local legend ruling his home break, as shooter Christopher Peel explains.

"So the first real Indonesian swell of the season appeared on the maps while I was in Bali, and I received a message off one of my long-time Indonesian friends, and Bingin local, Agus Sumertayasa, telling me that his home spot was going to be pumping."

"I figured I would get up there a day early and be ready to jump on the first lumps the Indian Ocean was going to deliver, but to our surprise, it was a lake! Not even a long board would have done it any justice. We all started to worry a little thinking it was too south, or the American-based forecasters had blown it, or maybe it was just a fizzer all together!? However, Agus was confident that the swell was there, but the direction hadn't shifted enough just yet and that we should wait until the afternoon, so we arranged to go out at 3pm."

"3pm rolled around and, just like clockwork, the ocean started to light up. One-foot to two-foot to three-foot to four-foot and settling at a picture perfect, consistent five-foot. The local crew were completely running the line-up – not in a rude way, but in a respectfully dominant way – in which they should. I shot all afternoon and then finished the day like any other, with Bintangs and a picture perfect sunset."

As we write these very words, *Surfing Life* are clearing schedules, drafting out-of-office emails, preparing boards, loading up board coffins and frantically hunting for our passports, as in a matter of days we're heading off to greet the very next swell for our annual Hot 100 trip, hopefully piloting ourselves into a few similar caverns. But not if it gets too big though, as then we'll, ah, take photos because, ah, our old knee injuries are starting to flare up. Book your ticket, you can't lose. 🐳



Just one of those locals Chris was talking about living large out front of his Bingin bliss.
PHOTO: CHRIS PEEL





THE CATTLE DOG APPROACH

 NICK CARROLL

DEMONSTRATION BY RUSSELL BIERKE AT A WEST OZ REEF
SEQUENCE BY JAMIE SCOTT

It's strangely resonant, isn't it – this idea of the Australian surfing wilderness. Like we have been gifted with a surfing geography that reflects almost perfectly what we imagine about civilisation and its dark opposite.

The waves in our populous zones, the Goldie, Sydney, the mid-northern points, are mostly easy affairs: warm watered, sand bottomed, low threat, and rarely over six feet. They let you in, don't hit you too hard, and once you've gained a certain level of skill and physical strength, sorta wilt a bit, like a leafy salad in a café. User-friendly shit, just right really for the kid learning airs, or the busy city-dweller who can only spare so much time for saltwater.

Such waves let you do what you like to 'em, whether it be fin busting proto-pro super technical gear or the hood-ornament stances of Retro Retro style, or anything in between. Hell, they even let middle-aged SUP kookery through the door. Easy.

But wander away from the cities and the warm water and the seachange paradises, and the surfing experience changes. Winds blow stronger. Oceans change colour. Coastlines grow craggier, flatter, harder, colder. Swells arrive from distant sources in long heavy lines, sometimes big as houses, and you walk for hours or drive jetskis through thunderstorms to get to the reefs where they break. And when they break, likely as not, they'll break YOU.

In such places, a surfer has to reach for other, less civilised techniques. Which leads us to young Russell and what I can't help but see as the Cattle Dog Approach.

THE BREAKDOWN

So in comes the kid at speed, into a section of a notorious wave, renowned for its unpredictable muscle. Look at the thing, in shot one, already betraying its raw power – the reef pulling a curve into it at the base, but the rest of it squared up and flat, with a lip just quiveringly ready to throw to hell and gone.

The line Russell then draws is impeccably simple, 45 degrees to the wave line, so there's an element

of down-the-line trim and an element of down-the-face drive. He's trying to hold speed and to make sure his rail line doesn't catch too deep and suck him up the face to his doom. I like how this line evolves, by the way; look at shot four, where he's edged it a fraction in favour of down-the-line, opening the shoulders just a little, and letting the front rail pull the nose around just a fraction. It's subtle, but it's also unflinching – whatever else he does on

this wave, he can't give any ground at ALL – and in shots five and six, it's given him a moment of breathing space; clear water just ahead of the suddenly developing foam ball.

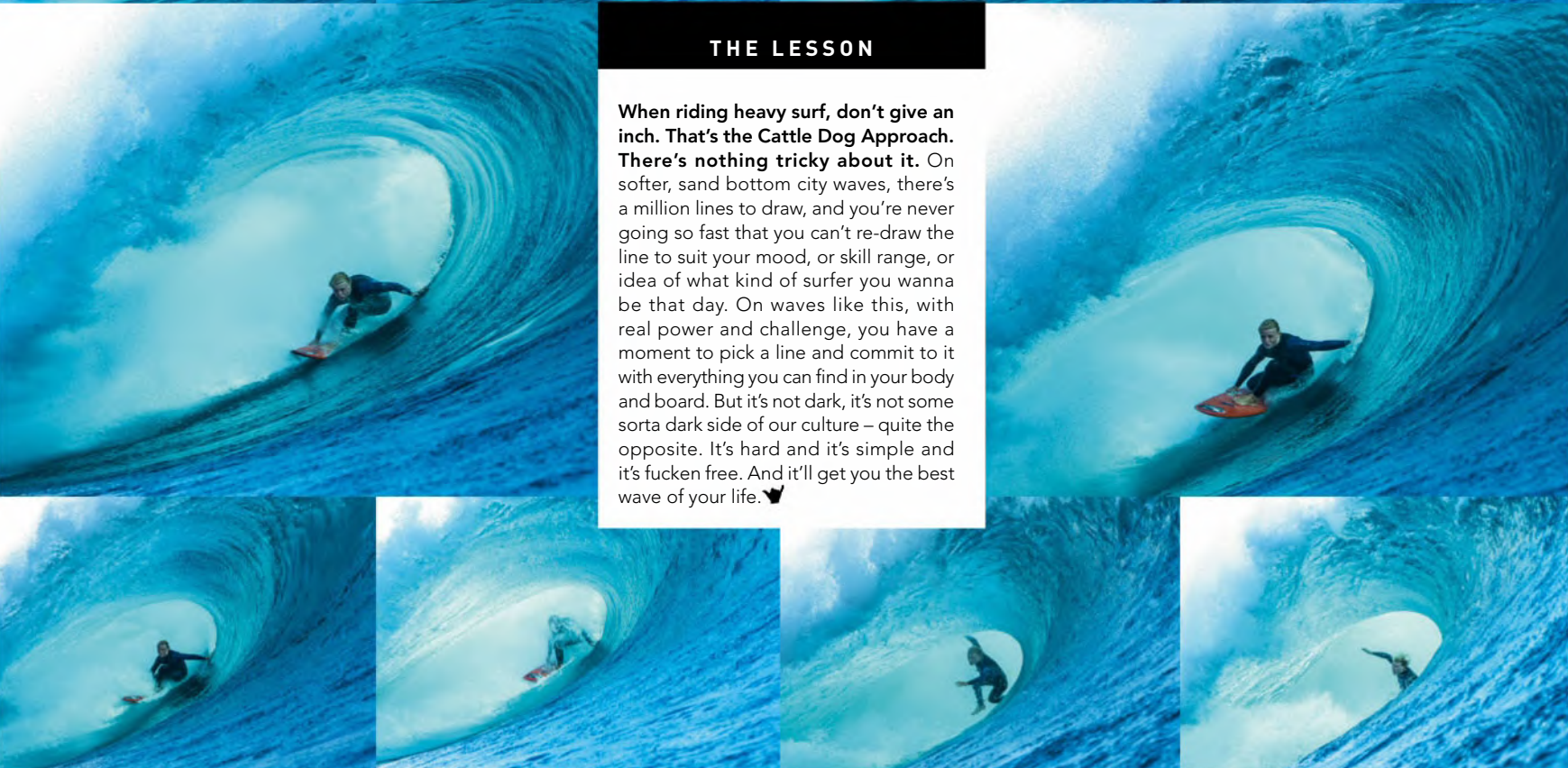
Then it gets him. Then he doesn't let it. Shot seven, the inside rail is caught in a spray line off the underside of the broken lip. It nearly puts him over the handlebars. But Russell doesn't give up that line. He will NOT give up. By shot nine he's popped briefly clear again.

Then in shot 10, it's got him for real, and Russell does what he has to do – bails. Flies through space while the wave begins to flare open again. It's doing what wild coast waves like doing best – luring guys to their doom, and looking gorgeous in the process. But even as he extracts himself from the situation, even running in mid-air, Russell still maintains his line. He's got one thing in mind, and it's the right thing and he's bloody sticking to it. He's a cattle dog.



THE LESSON

When riding heavy surf, don't give an inch. That's the Cattle Dog Approach. There's nothing tricky about it. On softer, sand bottom city waves, there's a million lines to draw, and you're never going so fast that you can't re-draw the line to suit your mood, or skill range, or idea of what kind of surfer you wanna be that day. On waves like this, with real power and challenge, you have a moment to pick a line and commit to it with everything you can find in your body and board. But it's not dark, it's not some sorta dark side of our culture – quite the opposite. It's hard and it's simple and it's fucken free. And it'll get you the best wave of your life. 🐕



Introducing The Clay Marzo
'Mad Cat' Pro Model

THE WORLD
IS SUPER



PHOTO: MIKE RILEY



CLAY MARZO'S MAD CAT

Art by Gregg Kaplan / Plate Lunch
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✍️ WADE DAVIS
✍️ MIMI LAMONTAGNE

WE'RE BACK, BABY! WELL, REALLY, WE NEVER WENT ANYWHERE. ALL THAT "BRAZILIAN STORM IS HERE TO STAY" DOOM AND GLOOM WAS MERELY TO LULL THE SOUTH AMERICANS INTO A FALSE SENSE OF SECURITY WHILE WE FIRED UP OUR 6'3" SECRET WEAPON – ONE OWEN CHARLES WRIGHT, THE CRITTER FROM CULBURRA, AKA AVATAR, AKA STRETCH, AKA OWEN, AKA THE ONLY SURFER IN THE SPORT'S HISTORY TO SURF TWO PERFECT HEATS IN THE ONE EVENT.



Owen Charles Wright, informing the universe of how many perfect heats he was planning on locking down, using his two longest fingers for maximum impact.
PHOTO: STU GIBSON



"I didn't go into the final necessarily knowing that I would, but I went in feeling like I could do whatever I wanted."

What Owen went and did in Fiji is known to you, and is now old news, but its impact on the 2015 World Title is yet to be felt. Along with Mick Fanning, Owen has one pre round-four result on his hands – everyone else has at least two. That means that Adriano and Filipe, the two surfers above Owen on the rankings, have to make it past round three in every remaining event this year, to not count a 13th or 25th at the end of the year, as the world title is decided by your best nine results from 11 events. Owen and Mick still have one throwaway bad result up their sleeves.

You see, the real 'Dream Tour' started in Fiji. Sure, the Aussie leg can be a grand spectacle, and sometimes Snapper goes fairly off its tits, but it's not the Dream Tour, and we're not going to mention Brazil. While we support Brazil, it's hardly a part of anyone's surfing dreams. The Dream Tour is Fiji and Teahupo'o, the long walls of J-Bay and the skatepark at Trestles. Having spent a lot of time at Chopes this year, Owen would be favourite

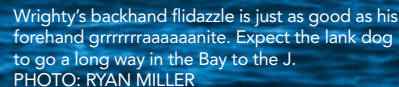
there; his backhand at J-Bay speaks for itself, and his high-prog repertoire suits Trestles to a capital T. California notwithstanding, betting men wouldn't be putting their lobsters on Toledo at any of those events, and we guarantee that he'll pick up another 13th before Europe.

As for Adriano, well Adriano can perform at every stop on Tour, so let's play worst-for-Australian-surfing case scenario and say that he makes at least round five in every Dream Tour event. Then he has Europe to contend with, and while we love Europe more than most Europeans, the events in France and Portugal are unpredictable tit-soaked affairs, places where faltering is expected. Owen is as prone to having a trip-up in Europe as anyone else; he's got a throwaway up his sleeve still, presuming that he holds his position through the Dream Tour stretch.

Now, we may be reaching, but we're excited! We want 2011 Owen back; the Owen who took it

to Slater during one of the king's many primes, and battled back-to-back-to-back finals with him, stealing surfing's most lucrative prize from the man for whom it was earmarked, during the surprisingly pumping, one-off contest in New York City. Owen's older now, and more relaxed. He's learnt about defeat and knows how to win. He's stronger, he has his work/play balance sorted and he's burning with a flame that we've not seen in him in years. See him screaming to Huey during the final in Fiji? See him go full MMA on his board when he warbled in crappy round-one slop? See him unable to contain his potty mouth after his first perfect heat? Owen has had his hiatus and he's now ready to take what's rightfully his – at the very least one of the big silver cups.

But nuts to us and our kiss of death, we jumped on the blower to the big O shortly after his win and right before we went to print, to get the good word from the man who just might be your 2015 World Champion.



OW: Yeah, it's crazy like that. Like, you go home

after a comp and think that there are all these things that you should be doing... but I haven't been doing them! I've just been doing whatever the hell I want, and it kinda worked, so I'm gunna keep running with that.

SL: Is a world title in your sights?

OW: It's in my sights, it's there, but I'm not thinking about it. I'm just enjoying this moment, and every event this year I've enjoyed thoroughly. So I think if I just keep doing that, it'll be there and it's an end goal, but I'm not going to look at it until Pipe comes around. And if I'm in the mix, I'll be in the mix – if not, as long as I've enjoyed every event I'll be stoked.

SL: And the next event, J-Bay, how are you going to get out of that heaving left mode into peeling right mode?

OW: Ah, it's the opposite to Fiji, isn't it? But between now and then, Rip Curl and myself have our eyes on a few destinations in South Africa, and we're planning to get there early. Mikey may have a competition there that I'd like to go to, so you know, there are some things that could get me there early for a bit of preparation. And it'll be great – it's preparation, but at the same time it's more fun for me to go and watch Mikey,

or go for a trip with Rip Curl, than to do nothing at home. That's more fun than preparation, and as long as there's fun involved in what I'm doing I'll be happy.

SL: You said you've felt like you've been in form for ages, but the results haven't come. How much of it is mental for you, versus getting quality time in the surf?

OW: I mean, there's a lot that is mental, and once you get a few heats going your way and you get a couple waves, it starts rolling. Brazil was a big turning point for me – I felt like I really started to feel it, and then this event, it showed me that Brazil actually was a turning point. There's definitely a lot to do with the mental side of it, feeling good and being happy.

SL: On the webcast, KS said you guys were talking about your heat before you paddled out, and you both agreed that the thing to do was focus on turns. But obviously, that's not what happened. What went through your mind when you saw what the waves were doing?

OW: That was funny, because a lot of the

things that I thought about, like, I think this is what's going to happen and then I'd plan for it – mother nature told a completely different story. It was kinda good to just put my head aside and really feel it, you know? Just feel what the ocean was doing and what was going on. That was really key for me this event. I was loving it.

SL: Honestly, how good do you feel right now? Best moment of your life?

OW: It's a really, really, really good feeling. It's pretty hard to describe. Like, I had the best waves ever today. Ever. And I won with 10s. But first and foremost they were the best waves ever and I just love surfing them so, so much. The event win was so secondary to that. It just feels amazing. But you know, I've had this feeling all year – I've been on so many trips and scored so many good waves it's ridiculous... just now I'm in a position where I can do something on Tour! So I'm pretty happy. 🐻



O on one of his recent trips to maximum boom boom Teahupo'o. He didn't hold back then, and it's a safe bet to assume that he'll be upping the ante even further in competition. Post-Dream-Tour ratings leader? Put your mum's house on it.
PHOTO: TED GRAMBEAU

***“as long as there’s fun involved in
what I’m doing I’ll be happy.”***





T H E INNER EDGE

The south coast of New South Wales is the most accessible slice of Australian surfing's extremity. But while it's easy enough to get to, you can really reap the benefits found at the farther flung fringes, just so long as you've got the grit and the guts to make it happen. Come take a south coast sojourn with your buddies at SL, as we bound through the inner edge of shredding Downunder.



The thing with the south coast is, that the farther south you go, the more edgy it gets. Kai Otton hails from right down the bottom, where men are men and roos are roos and wallets are dropped.
PHOTO: TROY SIMPSON



PHOTO: PETER BOSKOVICH

Practically, geographically, this is little more than outer suburbia. The south coast kicks off around an hour from Sydney and continues down to the Victorian border, snuggled conveniently between this first-world nation's two largest cities. This means that the south coast is mostly accessed by buses and trains, peppered with kit homes and golf courses, retirees and young families. It is not the fringe, on paper.

But still, something about a mission to the south coast of New South Wales makes you feel like a brave and intrepid pioneering adventurer. A Bourke, or a Wills. Something about heading south out of the sprawl, and past the farms and down the mountains; something about the assumed cold (again, geographically, it should only be marginally, if even, colder than the Sydney beaches, but by dang it feels like it), the laconic, trackie-bound locals, the abundant 'roos and especially, mostly, the waves.

That's what gives the south coast its frontier feel – the fact that mere hours out of Sydney you can find waves you've never heard of, good waves, and maybe surf them by yourself. Compared to the locales that we've covered in the previous two magazines, that makes this stretch the edge by an empty country mile.



Nate Tyler, California native, has been let in on the south coast secret. A long flight, short drive and he's right in the thick of the great Australian fringe.
PHOTO: JOSH TABONE

Owen Wright, south coast born and bred, setting up for his cover, on his way to a perfect heat (if that was Micro Hall the wave would look huge, so when gauging the height try to take into account the avatar's length).
PHOTO: ANDREW SHIELD





Ottz the top.
PHOTO: TROY SIMPSON



The south coast of New South Wales is slab land; home to the nation's highest concentration of swell-tripping, shallow rock ledges. Steaming up the coast, these swells thunder in, stand up and fold in half over the cunjies, bending into shapes that have no place in nature. But these anomalies don't go unmolested, as there's a committed crew of lunatics who want to be in the middle of these oceanic maelstroms, whenever they pulverise the reef with their malevolent designs.

But unlike Australia's other slabs, the south coast can get crowded. They say that the waves around Port Kembla and its steelworks are often packed, because the crew there live to surf the beasts when they're on, and work shifts to sustain that lifestyle. That's dedication: working all night, shovelling coal within Dante's Inferno, then making your way down to the beach and throwing yourself face first into rock ledges, assisted by a pile-driving, azure lip.

But slabs aren't all! There are kilometres of uncrowded beach breaks, the east coast's highest concentration, and points and plenty of river mouths, some of which are the best in the country on their day, yet extremely fickle. And the thing that makes the south coast a fringe is that these waves are usually uncrowded, and there are spots that are still very secret, and to get to them requires a bit of an effort. This is what makes the south coast a worthy companion for the other spots in our fringes issue.



The south coast overproduces world-class surfers, when you consider how few people live there. This is Kalani Ball, who is one of the best junior surfers in the land, and while he only just scrapes in as a south coast local, coming from its furthest northern locale, he's proof that this shredder-heavy region will keep on producing into the future.

PHOTO: ANDREW SHIELD

WINNER



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OWEN WRIGHT



We were sitting opposite Kai Hing while we were captioning this, so asked him to give us his thoughts on the south coast, in three sentences. "No crowds. Really fun waves. Good people, but you don't want to piss them off." Succinct, Kai.
PHOTO: PETER BOSKOVICH

EDGE



This is one of the slabs that the south coast is famous for – a heaving wave, lurching itself over a barnacle and cunjevoi covered reef, full of charging locals who live and breathe throwing themselves into it as often as possible. Dylan Robinson in the only place he wants to be in.
PHOTO: TROY SIMPSON

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ANTI RAIN

SURFING
IS EVERYTHING





Craig Ando knows that the south coast is the place to get work done, when work needs to be done t-t-today, junior. It's a hop, skip and a jump from Newy, and a darn productive place for jumps, not too sure on the hops and the skips.
PHOTO: JOHN RESPONDEK



Is there a young surfer in Australia as style soaked as Luke Hynd? We think nein.
PHOTO: ANDREW SHIELD



But as close as the south coast may seem, and as easily one thinks they can access the 'fringe surfing experience', sometimes the coast will make you pay to play, or something. Shieldsy and I recently found this out, when our rental car refused to start at Aussie Pipe. CLICK CLICK CLICK CLICK CLICK CLICK CLICK CLICK CLICK CLICK, she refused, as the sun was going down.

Aussie Pipe is in the middle of a reserve, near an Aboriginal mission, and nothing much else but gums and possums and kangaroos and boogieboarders. When our hire car wouldn't start, and our iPhones were Tindered down to one per cent (mine, not Shieldsy's, he was probably playing Words With Friends), and it was getting dark, and we were in the middle of nowhere, we began to feel like we were on the fringe of Australian surfing. When we were told that our car was cactus; that we'd have to get back to Sydney without it, but that there weren't buses, trains or shuttles for less than \$500, it was confirmed.

This is still the fringe. A local surfer told me that if you don't get out, if you don't move to Sydney, you stay for the waves. You find a missus and you have BBQs with your mates, and you find a job that'll be lenient on you taking time off to shred, and you surf. It's because it is quiet down there; it is a little, charmingly so, underdeveloped. But with its proximity to Sydney, perhaps it's only the full-time locals who get to really experience the fringe nature of the south coast, when they have it to themselves mid-week. All that we know is that there are fringe-worthy waves, and that it's a bloody hassle when your hire car breaks down.

K-Ball again, kung fu pick, not far from home, so far from crowds. We'll never tell you where this is, but on a coastline so long and wave drenched as this, all you have to do is load up your car, pack your respect, and go on an adventure. Happy hunting.
PHOTO: ANDREW SHIELD



INNEREDGE

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RED ROCK, BLUE OCEAN

WELCOME TO AUSTRALIA'S
GREAT NORTH-WEST

 MIMI LAMONTAGNE

Courtney Brown waves "see ya later" as the sun, done with harassing Australia for the day, pisses off to pester Africa.
PHOTO: KERBY BROWN



**IT'S MASSIVE.
IT'S EXPANSIVE.
IT'S STRIKING.
AND IT'S ALMOST
COMPLETELY
EMPTY.**

It's where wind and waves and fishing are the main facets of activity and production, and the landscape consists of dry, red, desert rock and deep, blue, tumultuous ocean. It's a simple, remote life in a jaw-dropping part of the world.

But despite the simplicity of The Great North-west, it's a complex part of the world. Which is why we've broken it down into categories for you; the first of which will (hopefully) paint a picture of the town, the people and the intricacies of life. The second will tell tales of endless, perfect, offshore waves, and the hardships that come along with them. And in the third, we drill beneath the beautiful surface of the town and find a group of people whose lives have been changed forever by the mining boom, and in turn, have changed The Great North-west forever.

SO, WHERE ARE WE?

We're here to talk about the north-west of Australia. But I've never been to the north-west of Australia. So how do you write about a place that you've never experienced first hand? You talk to as many people as you can. Ry Craike. Clay Marzo. Kerby Brown. Mick Corbett. Each surfer has his own unique connection with the area, and we're going to take you into their homes, their lives and their WAs.

Let's begin with Clay; a man of few, yet potent, words; born in Maui, residing in Kalbarri, Western Australia.

"An old-school surfer's paradise," he starts, thoughtfully. "Empty slabs, barrelling waves, perfect offshore winds. Nothing but desert and waves. Where the land meets the sea. Bush. Sand. Reef. Not many houses. Not many people."

And the waves, Clay? "Peak here, section here, A-frame here. Mental and spitting. Get down the line and there's more and more racing long pits with no one there. Move down, get a slab with a turn section. It's good. Localised. That's what keeps it really good, low key and mellow. I like the localism."

And the people? "I have this mate called

Foam Ball Warrior. He's pretty heavy. He was getting a bunch of slabs and he got one and came up with a broken nose. When I first moved to Kalbarri I felt welcome. I just made my way in the line-up and stayed to the side, and everyone was really nice."

The only negative comment Clay had about where he's moved to, across the globe from his home, is that he found it hard to buy mayonnaise. "It's very hard to get mayo and cheddar cheese. Food is important."

Will you stay? "Only time will tell."

Clay's north-west WA is that of a transplant's. Take, for example, **Ry Craike's WA.** Ry was the instigator in Clay's move – they travelled together and then one day Clay came to visit, and essentially, never left. But Ry sees his town as an insider. It made him who he is today.

"I've lived in Kalbarri since I was three," he says. "It's an amazing place to grow up – based around everything to do with the ocean – surfing, fishing and diving are what our days consist of. It's very isolated, but that's the way I like it. Where I went to school there were only about 20 kids from grades eight to 12, and we did it all by correspondence. It was either that or we had to go to Geraldton and attend boarding school, and I'm stoked that I got to stay home. I entertained myself with the ocean."

What's a day in the life of Ry? "I wake up with my girl, Krystle, ride down to the beach to check the surf and see what the weather's doing. If it looks good around town then I'll surf, or if it looks like it might be good in a remote spot we'll rally a team and hit the road for a camping mission. I'll go away for a few days between trips, but I'm always keeping my eye on the weather to see if I need to race home and jump straight on the boat for a fishing mission with the old man."

And that's Ry's north-west – a world that's based on weather and wind and what's swimming in the ocean. What's swimming in the ocean is what the town survives on. But we'll get to that later. Right now, let's

Ry Craike looks like a mythical being
entombed in an icy prison... in some
regards he is, minus the ice.
PHOTO: MIKE RILEY



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TEAM RIDER CASEY GRANT

look at a not-so-dissimilar home. **Kerby Brown's.** Kerby is also from Kalbarri, but for some time he went to live in Perth. Inner city Perth. Smack dab in the middle. He's back in his hometown now, but having that contrast would have given some serious perspective.

"I think of Kalbarri as a relaxing place. Somewhere to escape and kick back. I think of red dirt meets the blue ocean. Full contrast. Red cliffs and red rocks against the deep colours of the ocean. It's somewhere that I feel comfortable.

"Up here, as you go up the coast it gets more perfect. It's the raw, heavy version of the Indonesian waves, minus the crowds. They're all thick, slabby waves and they're easy to get hurt on. They're off the beaten track and away from any hospitals. The surfers are used to surfing heavy waves, so they all go pretty crazy. They're not scared. They're rugged.

"Some spots you can't help but think about how far away medical help is. You've gotta be prepared. We've had lots of incidences – a couple of years ago one of my best mates broke his leg clean in half up at Gnoraloo, and that's a good hour-and-a-half 4WD track, bumpy road, to get out. I was ambulanced out of there last year, actually. I went head first into the reef, and was just lucky that there was a surgeon

and an anaesthetist there. I had a huge hole in my head and I hit my tailbone – they thought I had broken my pelvis. Things like that will always be in the back of your head, but you don't want to think about it too much. The more you think about it the more it will happen."

Kerby's north-west – a place of contrast – of comfort and risk. Now, you might be wondering why we included Mick Corbett in this article about Australia's north-west. He's from Perth, right? Right. But he's spent a good chunk of his life up north – inside mines and on top of oil rigs. To Mick, the north-west isn't a place of relaxation, or of red dirt and blue water, or of barrelling, spitting slabs. First and foremost, it's a means to an end.

"It's easy, good money and you're guaranteed. But it's hot. It's 12-hour days; it's going back to your camp, eating your food, going to sleep and doing it all again. It's horrible. It's the closest thing to hell on earth. You come back and you party and spend all your money travelling and stuff, and then you're out of money. And you think, *Ah well, better go back up north...* It's an endless cycle, and it's terrible up there. Don't get me wrong – there are a lot of really nice places up north, but when you're in a mine it's not very nice. To be

honest, you're better off in prison."

And to a whole lot of people, including people who live in places like Kalbarri and Geraldton, that's their north-west. And it's something that impacts the entire community, the entire region, and in the end, the entire state. And we'll delve into this topic, drill straight into the shaft, but that's later. For now, let's talk surfing.

Yeah! What About The Surfing?

Growing up in Australia's north-west means one thing, no matter where or how you live, and that's the unchanging inevitability that you are isolated, and will continue to be isolated unless you move. Now, most people who live in areas like that choose to, and actively seek it. But, what about their kids? Their kids are simply born into it, and until they're old enough to make a decision for themselves, they're stuck there. They'll grow up with a select few playmates and they'll throw themselves into every activity that the land has to offer. Here in the north-west, that's surfing and fishing. And both are available in abundance.

The amount of waves, and the quality of waves, near Kalbarri and surrounding towns are top in the country, bar none – no less the world. You've got the line-up mostly to yourself. You've got nothing



else to do (unless it's flat, then you head out on the fishing boats). And you're spoilt for choice. As Clay put it, "Empty slabs, barrelling waves, perfect offshore winds. Nothing but desert and waves." As a surfer, you couldn't ask for more.

But what happens if one of those kids wants to become, say, a professional surfer? It isn't very easy to get noticed when you're thousands of kilometres away from... anything. So what happens? Both Ry and Kerby went through contest circuits, they made money off surfing, they wove pathways for their careers – each in different ways.

For Ry, living in the north-west was beneficial. He reckons that it's helped his career as a freesurfer, "As it's a pretty interesting place and kind of sets me apart from a lot of other freesurfers." But, "Maybe if I lived close to a city or something I might have gone down the contest path a bit more. But who knows? I feel pretty blessed and lucky to have gotten to live the life I have."

But for Kerby, who chased the contest scene for years, it wasn't quite so beneficial. "I went through a period where I was doing the contest scene and stuff like that, and if you want to be in that, doing the best for your sponsors, you've gotta be in the cities and places where the hype is. I got to a point where I just didn't care anymore. I just wanted to surf good waves, and eventually I was happy just doing that and being away from the scene. But it's definitely hard, almost impossible, being from an isolated town if you want to be a name in the contest scene.

"I see a lot of groms around here that are pretty talented and they don't really do anything with it because they don't know how to, or they don't see the hype. I mean, there are opportunities to compete if you're really set on it; you've gotta travel, though. A lot. If you have it in your blood and you really want to do it, you'll find a way to do it. But I guess a lot of kids grow up with that laidback lifestyle here, and their parents are just cruisers, so they never pursue making it with their talent. They're happy just fishing and chilling. And if they do, perchance, move to somewhere like the Gold Coast to try and 'make it', they just think, *Yikes get me outta here*, because they grew up in such a mellow environment. The kids that grow up around the crowds and the hype are a lot hungrier.

"And there are a lot of kids from around here that are really coming up. I don't know if it's because I'm getting older so I notice it more, but it seems like this next generation has a lot of keen kids that are all the way up here. You see them out on bigger days now and they're definitely having a go. They don't know any different; about how hectic the surf can get up here – they're used to the rocks and they're just throwing themselves over the ledge and getting washed up and not caring. It's pretty impressive to see. Even my son, who's only four – there are no beach breaks around to teach him, so I have to find those little spots between the rocky patches and push him in. So he doesn't get the luxury of the nice white sand beaches, but I think that's a good thing. It's all just what you're used to."

So here you've got kids with such a passion and fire for surfing they lose regard for their bodies – kids that charge harder than the rest of the country, because, well, that's their only option – yet kids that can't cut a break if they wanted to. And growing up in such an idyllic, isolated and laidback place, it'd be pretty hard to peel yourself away to chase a dream that might not even exist.





Kerby Brown invokes that wild, frontier, outlaw spirit by channelling his inner bush ranger, with this single barrelled steeze.
PHOTO: MIKE RILEY



The ever-elusive Clay Marzo hides from the prying eyes behind the wet, golden crescents of West Australia's north.
PHOTO: MIKE RILEY



Undercover fisherman Ry, scouting some new workplace locations from the inside. The fish have no chance when their hunter spends so much time wrapped in brine.
PHOTO: KERBY BROWN

An interesting comparison to that of somewhere like the Gold Coast, where it seems that more and more groms feel entitled to the competition circuits – and yet, do they have to throw themselves into remote, dangerous, slabbing, spitting waves to be noticed?

AND, HOW DOES IT ALL WORK?

Whenever I visit small or remote towns, I wonder what makes them work, how they run. Who supports whom? Where does all the money get made? You can't have a town that runs on dentistry and pie shops and the (un)pleasantries of daily life. You've gotta have industry. And in Kalbarri, alongside the majority of the north-west, fishing and mining are those two industries. They're what keep the wallets lined and the bakeries in business.

Ry Craike and his dad are wet line fishermen. Wet line fishermen are basically fishermen who catch scaled fish – they drop lines to target reef species or use netting to catch onshore fish. And it's hard, but profitable, work. "We go out for about two to three days at a time and fish 24/7 with pretty much no sleep," says Ry. "It's hard work, but I love what I do and my old man has been great at helping to train me, so hopefully I can run the boat one day. We used to have an abalone licence for about 15 years and it made us a lot of money, but about five years ago we had a really warm current of water come down the coast and wipe out the whole population of abalone, which was a real bummer. We have been doing some transplanting with the fisheries to try to bring them back, but I don't think we will ever see them in our lifetime again."

About the same time as the mining boom was happening, there were new rules and regulations coming in for fishermen in the north-west – rules and regulations that made it a lot harder to make a decent living off cray fishing. And for a long time cray fishing was the town's main money-maker. So a lot of those families that survived off cray then had to go find a new way to put food on the table. And as we all know, jobs aren't particularly abundant in very small towns.

"A lot of the cray fishermen had to stop cray fishing when the new rules came into place," says Kerby, who was in Kalbarri at the time. "So when the mining boom

happened they stopped fishing and went up north to work on the rigs for oil and gas. A lot of people went up and started flying in and flying out, and it changed the way our town worked. We're lucky that it hasn't changed our price range for good, because the rest of WA has just gone nuts because of it. Things are just too expensive. But I guess things have, and always will be, expensive here because there's just nothing around.

"But it's quietened down a lot up there. The boom is kinda over. There's a lot less work, fewer projects, and the price of oil has dropped. Heaps of people are getting laid off, not only on the rigs but in the mines, too. Heaps of my friends went up there and a lot of them don't have jobs now. It's funny when I talk to them about it – they didn't enjoy the work at all, but they enjoyed the freedom, the time off and the money. I had a fair few friends who would have houses in WA and then they'd start working in the mines or on the rigs and they'd rent their houses and go live in Bali because it was so cheap. It's a good surfer's job if you can handle it, because of the freedom, but I was never sure if it was worth it. I did some work on a rig up there, five weeks on, five weeks off, and I would never do that consistently again. I couldn't do it forever. And there are a lot of people that have been doing it for 10 years, that kind of roster. It's hard to give up. I mean, I've had a taste of it, and it's crazy how much money you can make in such a short period of time."

But as Kerby said, the mining boom is over. The jobs are dwindling. So all those people who gave up on fishing and invested their careers into the mining industry are left... without that exorbitant cash flow, and no way of starting it up again. And here's where we get to Mick Corbett, the one whose north-west was "the closest thing to hell on earth". He works in the mines, and on the rigs, and he's seen first hand the havoc that the boom has wreaked on people's lives.

"People aren't working up north in the oil and gas industry because they like it. They're doing it because they're addicted to the money, and because you get a bit of time off. And if you're a surfer, it's the easiest way to make decent money and keep surfing. And there are two types of people on mine sites and drill rigs – there are



Ry's the fire flairer, the twisting fire flairer.
PHOTO: KERBY BROWN

the people that are there to work and get out and do stuff, like me (we're the happy ones), and then there are the ones who know they couldn't survive without that amount of money, who are locked in for life. Even if they don't admit it, you know it.

"And it's pretty fucked up to see, because not only are they stuck in this life, but it's fucking up their families. And it's a whole lot of families. I don't know how someone can work FIFO if they've got a partner. It's too much stress on the whole situation, and both parties just fall off the wagon. We see it a lot – I've heard a lot of stories. It ruins marriages. People go up there to work for three weeks and come back for one, and it's just too hard on the family to function. I've always done bigger, longer stints of four weeks and six weeks in a row, which I reckon is better than two weeks on, two weeks off, because you get longer chunks at home. But shit, I know guys who have girlfriends up in the mines and girlfriends at home! And the girls are just as bad. They'll have a few boyfriends in the camp and a husband at home. That shit happens.

"But now, people are getting laid off from the mines and rigs. A lot of people. And the thing is, a lot of the construction had died down out

there too, because the mining companies have finished building what they need to get built. The construction workers were making the same amount as the miners, and they were relying on a wave that was never going to be there in a few years' time. So people have gone and bought fancy houses and stuff, and now they're out of jobs and sitting in these houses they can't afford. And I hear about all these lay-offs the most because I work in the industry. I see it. But you really notice it around the surf towns and the fishing towns up north – there are a lot more people hanging around that have gone back home and are looking for jobs, and it's really tough. We're talking thousands and thousands of people throughout not only the north-west, but all the surfing and fishing towns of WA.

"There are a lot of people, and a lot of investors, who have built houses during the boom that were worth one million dollars, and now they're worth \$500,000 or thereabouts, because the economy isn't as inflated as it was a few years ago. And now no one can get rid of 'em at a decent price. People have stopped buying, people have stopped selling – in general, people are just spending less because they don't know what they'll do for money. They've

got no jobs. It really impacts the whole economy."

So right now, towns like Kalbarri and Geraldton, and even Margaret River and Perth, are going to have to figure out what the hell to do. While the mining industry is fickle, the commercial fishing industry will always be there – just how many jobs can it provide, and families can it support? Those who have been laid off from the mines, and the rigs, and the construction sites, will have to acclimatise themselves to a less lavish style of living. They'll have to go back to their roots of red rock and blue ocean, desert and sea, and figure out what to do. Some might simply decide to leave; some might become a part of the tourism industry (an industry that's slowly and steadily gaining traction in the north-west) and some might go back to the fisherman's life.

But no matter what they do, the stunning, isolated piece of land and sea and waves will always be there. It was there before the mining boom, and it will be there long after the social and economic aftermath disappears completely.

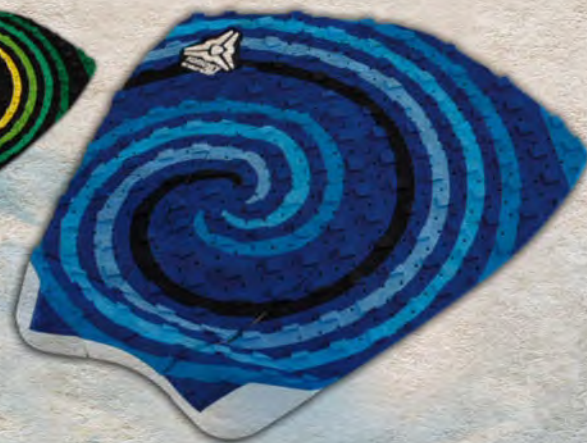
As Clay Marzo so eloquently put it, the best things about The Great North-west are the people and the barrels. And that? That will never change. 🐟



CLAY MARZO

SIGNATURE 3 PIECE

Lightec construction, Elevated Square traction, 6mm arch, 20mm kick



Komunity Project team rider

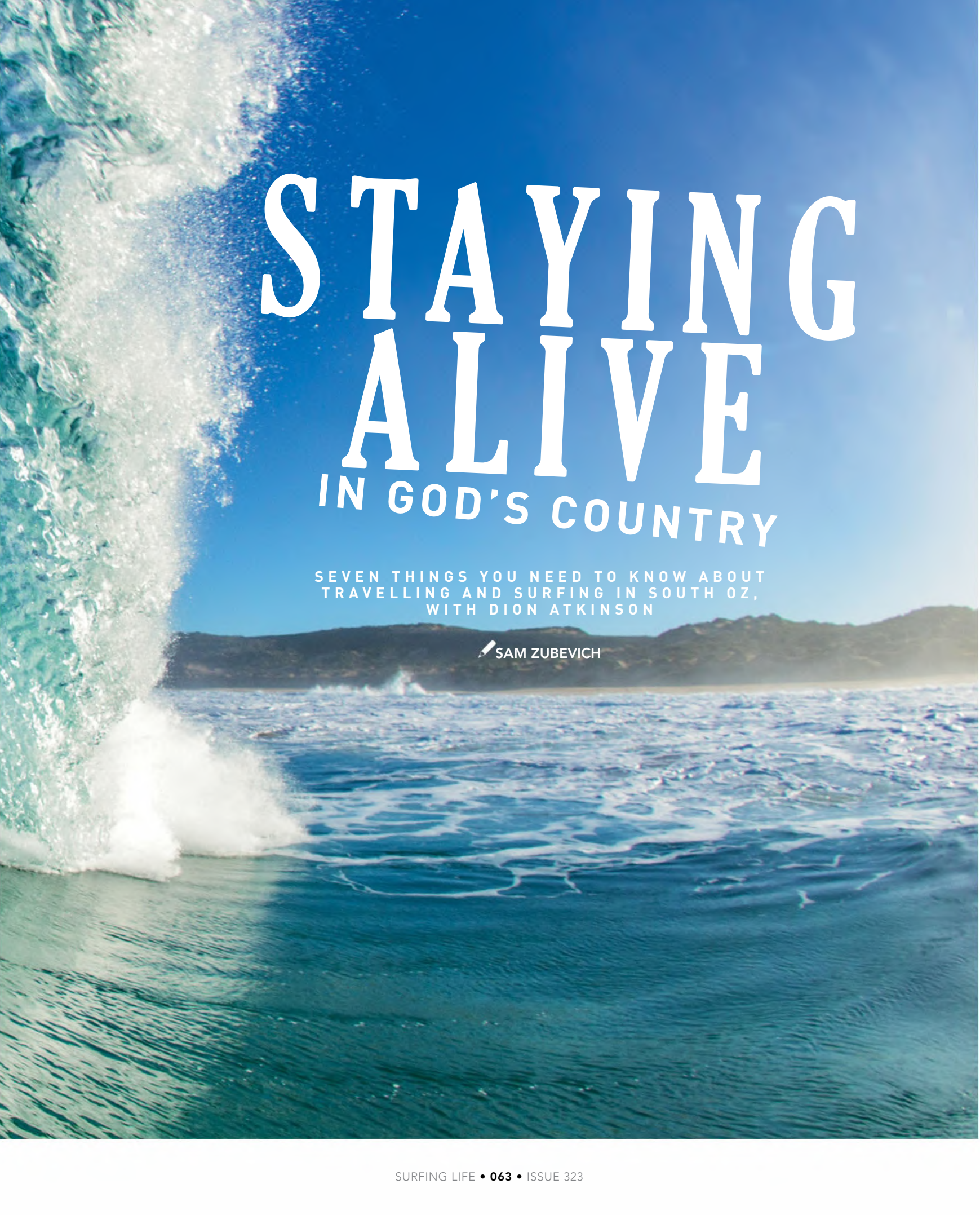
CLAY MARZO

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Dion pushing away an imaginary fan, as he
prepares to bang on his imaginary bongo, in
a very real South Australian cave.
PHOTO: ANDREW SHIELD





STAYING ALIVE

IN GOD'S COUNTRY

SEVEN THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT
TRAVELLING AND SURFING IN SOUTH OZ,
WITH DION ATKINSON

 SAM ZUBEVICH

Noa Deane spins over South 'Straya
suspicious of the sharks that swim below.
PHOTO: DAMON ARANDELOVIC





Unlike the 'middle grounds' of our last issue, the fringe areas are never going to attract the gentrifying, seachanging hordes. South Oz is the perfect example of a place that's mighty attractive to surfers, but not even remotely of interest to almost anybody else. Down there, the desert, the snakes, and even the kangaroos sometimes try to kill you, and the sharks... well, even if one doesn't necessarily want to kill you, the sheer size of the bastards means that even a cursory nibble will probably end in the loss of life or limb.

So if you're going to survive an expedition through South Oz, or even take a brief sojourn to her more user-friendly locales (ha! User friendly!), you'll probably need a guide. And, short of cajoling a wizened old local to give up their hard-earned secrets with a generous amount of Barossa Valley's finest, this suitably ambiguous break-down by Dion Atkinson could mean the difference between having to surf with your arse hanging out of your wetsuit (more on that later), or scoring the day of the year at a deserted reef break... for two weeks straight.

Collectively, the almost 4000 kilometres of rugged SA coastline shaped Donny into one of the hardest working, and hardest charging, surfers in the biz today. And, thank the Laird, everyone in the surfing world got to see the fruits of his labour at Teahupo'o last year when he made the quarters at the best/heaviest/most terrifying WCT event ever. So, without further ado, let's dive into the seven things you need to know about travelling and surfing in South Oz, courtesy of one of her favourite sons.



Soli Bailey solitarily bailing on society's banes.
PHOTO: ANDREW SHIELD



YOU CAN HAVE IT ALL

"I guess what I love most about South Australia is you have the best of both worlds. I was living in the outskirts of Adelaide, which is where it starts to feel more like a small town. That's great, but you're still only 40 minutes away from the city, so you've got everything you could ever need, but if you want the simpler or quieter things in life, then that's only a short drive away, too."

"Obviously there are waves in Adelaide itself, and it's not too consistent, but it does get really fun at the same time. It's kind of like the Californian vibe of San Clemente or something; it's got the same gradient where the continental shelf goes out quite gradually, so the waves come in pretty soft and buttery, but still rippable. That's good though, whether you're learning, or still pretty young or just practising for contests in smaller surf.

"Then you can always go to Victor Harbour, which is just under an hour away, and that's where you get your punchier beachies, but also your weekend warrior sessions! Haha. You see some encounters with people from Adelaide sometimes, but it's

a good place. I really try to explore when I'm down there, though. From Adelaide to the West Oz border there's about 20 hours of coastline, with nooks and crannies everywhere, so there's always somewhere to surf. That aspect is probably what I miss the most when I'm up here or overseas, just knowing that my mates are probably exploring another beautiful part of the state.

"You really can have a bit of everything in South Oz. I mean, on a good day, it's not just slabs or one particular spot. Nearly the whole coastline comes alive – whether you want lefts, rights, beachies, reefs, you can find what you want. I think a lot of the time I go out there and just try to get barrelled, but then you're like, *Shit, I haven't done a turn for a few days!* At that stage you want to go and find something rippable to get your high performance fix, so I don't actually mind heading back to Adelaide to surf fun little onshore waves or whatever's on offer."

Soli B under a sandy bottomed steaming barrel.
PHOTO: ANDREW SHIELD



"Coming from me, wherever you want to go, you'll get out there, you won't know where you are, you'll probably pop a tyre, hit a kangaroo and maybe fall asleep at the wheel. It's not easy."



THE MORE THINGS CHANGE, THE MORE THEY STAY THE SAME

"Some parts of the state have definitely got a lot more crowded since I was a kid. I guess the mid-coast area, where I'm from, has been booming the last few years. Surfing has probably doubled in popularity since I was 10 years old. I don't know if it's a combination of the internet and cams and that sort of thing too, but the solo sessions that even I got to enjoy when I was a kid don't really happen anymore. That's good in some ways, because surfing in South Oz sort of needs it to go forward, but the waves down there don't accommodate as many people as say, the Gold Coast, because Kangaroo Island blocks so much of the swell. There's only about 15kms of coastline that gets waves in the metropolitan beaches, and a lot of people to squeeze in.

"On the other hand, I know that some locals out in the country might tell a different story, but I don't feel like out there has changed too much, especially compared to the city. I guess they just get a bit worried with the naming of spots or whatever (like Occy mentioning a notoriously sketchy and heavily guarded wave during the Billabong Pro Tahiti commentary last year). It's sort of an unwritten law in places like that and in West Oz – you come and enjoy and then you don't name anywhere. At the same time though, in the last 10 years, we've had nearly every Australian pro surfer travel through there, but that hasn't changed the number of random punters going down and wanting to surf. People who really want to do it will go, but most won't. Almost everyone is still scared shitless of sharks. That hasn't changed, and it's probably the one thing that will, absolutely, never change.

"Other than the sharks, and the sheer heaviness of the waves, it's an absolute mission. Like, coming from me, wherever you want to go, you'll get out there, you won't know where you are, you'll probably pop a tyre, hit a kangaroo and maybe fall asleep at the wheel. It's not easy. So that accessibility part will probably never change either!"



BE READY TO

DRIVE MORE THAN EVER



Shit drive. PHOTO: ANDREW SHIELD

"People kind of trip out on the amount of time you have to spend travelling in South Oz. I've driven eight hours for just a day trip, and even more for an overnigher. That's eight hours [each way], and for two days, that kind of distance is actually pretty standard. You'll round up a few of your mates so you can split petrol and share the driving, and to score good waves, solid travel time is definitely a constant.

"Depending on where you want to end up, with the forecast and what kind of wave you want to surf in mind, everything is so spread out that it's usually a seven-and-a-half to 10 hour drive. My van is actually the vehicle of choice, mainly because you can have a decent sleep in it! Haha. I love that thing at home. Either that, or a dual cab ute with 4WD is what you want. Pack all the boards, some swags, and away you go."



We bet that there's a trifecta of
Dion's dancing, completed overleaf.
PHOTO: ANDREW SHIELD



DON'T PACK LIGHT...

"Well I've definitely not had it a couple of times, but you really want to have a first aid kit, without a doubt. Get a basic one, at least. You've gotta have a spare tyre, maybe two, and a little tool kit as well. There's always something that might need fixing, especially when you're going over corrugations out there. Something might rattle loose in your car and suddenly you're a backyard mechanic! You've got to at least give it a go. A few back-up boards are essential too, because you break them pretty bloody easy. Even a few back-up wetties for when you hit your bum on the reef! Haha. You seriously split your wetty open more often than you'd think. Plus, getting in at a few places is hard and the reef is pretty sharp so there's a good chance you'll nick your wetty or cut your feet, or both. You definitely need to take a lot of water with you, too. When the roads are that long, and shops are 200km apart, you need a couple of big bottles! Just make sure you're restocking at every opportunity.

"You'll need to bring a fair bit of clothing because the difference between night and day is ridiculous. The weather will mess with your head, especially just out of summer, where it can still be over 40 degrees during the day, but the night is freezing. It's crazy – you feel like you're in the American desert or something. Normally you sleep in a swag, so you rug up and get as warm as possible, then you wake up and there's dew all over and everything is just bitterly cold. In winter you need a good 4/3, often with the whole ensemble – hood, gloves and booties. Summer is still a well-sealed 3/2, or maybe a short arm if you're lucky. Sometimes we get the swells that go past Tassie, and when those really south currents come through it gets even colder again.

"As far as boards go, you definitely don't need a groveler for most areas, but in Adelaide you'll want the option of a step-down or a fun board for sure. It's pretty user friendly for a standard shortboard in general, or whatever you want to ride. It is what you want to make it, too; there's plenty of power, but you can surf whatever you want, really. If you've snapped everything other than your 5'10" you just surf it, have fun and try to whack some bigger fins in it or something!"

Jack Freestone, jacking free of that
big stone in the back there.
PHOTO: DAMON ARANDELOVIC

Told you so.
PHOTO: ANDREW SHIELD





A BIT OF RESPECT GOES A LONG WAY

"The feeling about cameras and that sort of thing goes up and down. I guess, being me, I've definitely had some threats over the years. Some people just get in that frame of mind, like, I've gotta protect this spot! One day they're your best mate and the next day, they're not. I dunno. There has definitely been a bit of a stand against it over the last few years. Like, the WSL wanted to hold a Big Wave World Tour event out there and, hat off to 'em, the locals protested against it properly and it was shut down. They've just gotta keep it consistent across everyone, you know, 'cause I feel like I cop the brunt of it, being South Australian. I mean, people go down and use the coast, get their waves and their shots or whatever, then they nick off and don't hear anything about it. I kind of cop it instead because I'm from there, but I'm always gonna go back, whether I take my mates or just go solo.

"People are starting to realise that the crowds out there won't change too much. It's not even like a lot of the coast in West Oz, it's a lot further to drive and even more hardcore in terms of accessibility and local knowledge. I mean, half the time when you go out there you're looking for people to surf with, rather than being pissed off that there's eight of you out there. When does that ever happen?

"It's not like you're going to be threatened to get out of the water if you turn up with only a couple of guys and you're respectful. If you don't have a camera, you're pretty much allowed everywhere. If you know how to get there and are willing to paddle out, you're kind of welcome. That's what I love actually, that even though you'll have a hard time in some circumstances, you can turn up just to have a dig. You see so many guys who are touring around Australia that you just bump into – they might have Northern Territory plates on the car and they're doing the whole coastline or whatever. They'll turn up and the locals will do their thing, but if you just wait your turn then you'll always get your waves."



In places where there are a lot of sharks, people say, Don't talk about the sharks! Nuts to that! That's precisely the place to talk about sharks, as in, Have you seen any lately? J-Freestone, bounce.
PHOTO: DAMON ARANDELOVIC



THE ELEPHANT

IN THE ROOM

(WHICH IS ACTUALLY A SHARK)

Noa looks like he's got a mullet here, and not as hot as Noa usually looks.
PHOTO: DAMON ARANDELOVIC

"We held a fundraiser recently for Chris Blowes, the guy who was attacked by a six-metre Great White in April. He lost his leg, but it's just crazy that he survived, really. I think this last attack hit me the hardest 'cause he's from Adelaide and he's a young guy. It absolutely sucks. He was nearly dead, without a pulse, for an hour-and-a-half, and lost 90 per cent of his blood. It's honestly a miracle that he's still with us.

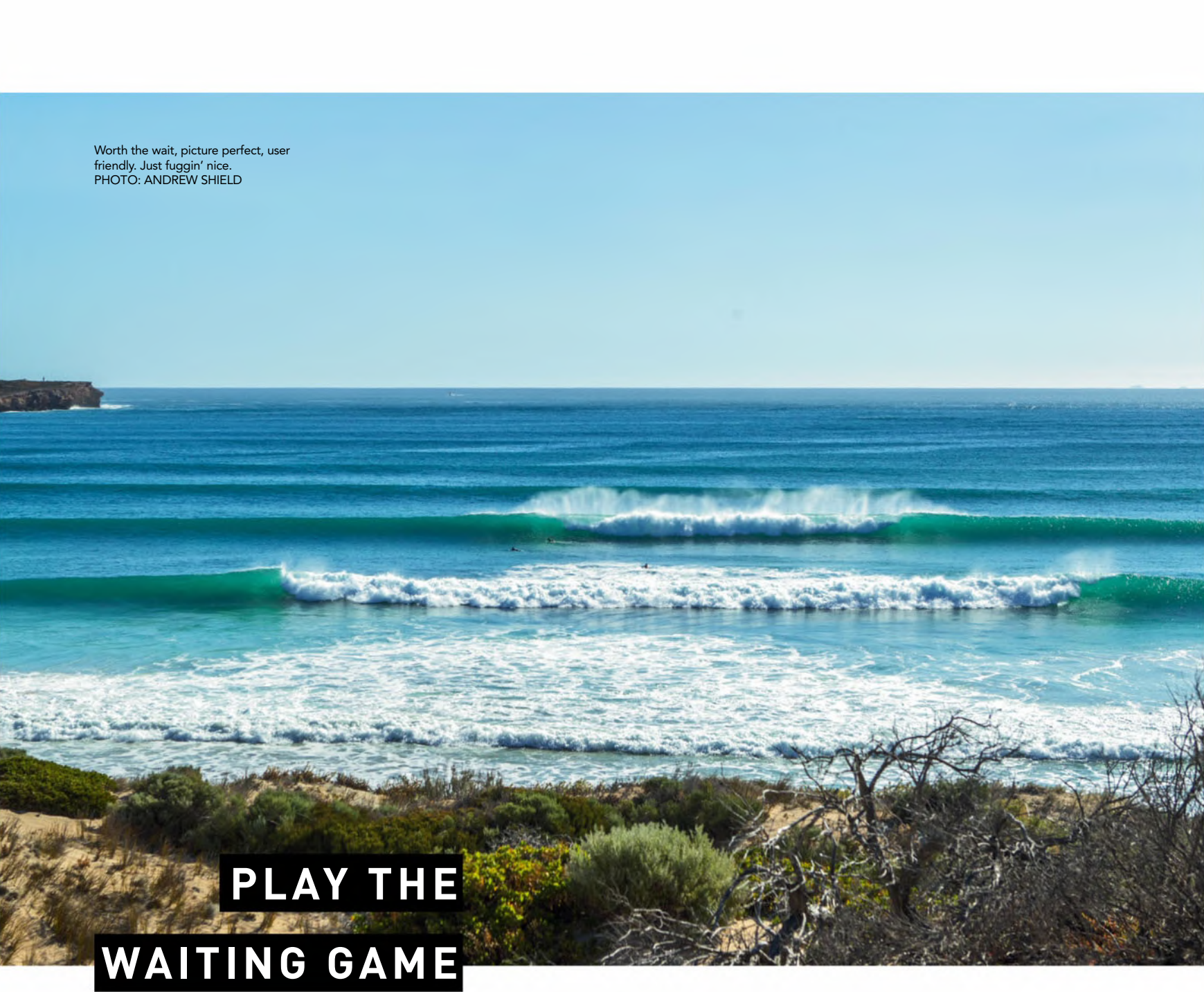
"I was thinking about going home and heading down that way to surf, and it's sort of something that you don't think of 'cause the waves are normally that good, but that's always

gonna be there, and as long as terrible things like that still happen every now and then, I think it always will be. I've been going out there and surfing those spots since I was a grommet, and it even hits me really hard. So your average punter from the east coast isn't going to go, *Hey, I'm gonna drive for 24 hours, maybe get skunked, and surf by myself in ridiculously sharky waters.* Obviously sharks are everywhere, but at the same time there are plenty of factors down there that amplify the risks, like the ocean currents, the tuna farms and the cage diving.

"I've come across a few before, but haven't experienced anything too scary first hand. Just

sightings and hearing about things that mates have seen, or even the few times that they've been bumped off their boards. Although, one time we were surfing off this island that's close to where they do the shark cage diving, and this boat came up to us saying, 'Ah, just to let you know, we've just seen a big seal get bitten in half about 2kms out to sea.' We're just mucking around on a jetski, towing and paddling into this little wave, so it's like, *Oh thanks mate, we might go in! Enjoy your day!* Haha. It's always there, you've just gotta try to be smart and pick your battles."

Worth the wait, picture perfect, user friendly. Just fuggin' nice.
PHOTO: ANDREW SHIELD



PLAY THE WAITING GAME

"You'll rock up on a certain day and it won't even look like there's a wave there. If the winds are wrong or whatever, it's a pretty wild ocean! A lot of the places aren't that recognisable. You definitely need to pick your week or even just a couple of days that look perfect for the spot you have in mind. If it's big and stormy, you can't really identify anywhere out there. But on the right day, it's beautiful.

"Being a local and spending time there you

know the ins and outs of where likes certain wind and swell directions, but if you're just travelling through and you think, *I've got two weeks off, I'm gonna go and find this wave and surf it!* You can't do that! It probably would've happened more often in the old days, and they would've got skunked for a week or two. Especially coming into wintertime, we can have straight onshore winds for a week. There aren't many places to hide when it's like that!

"The wave quality is good enough that a lot of people are pretty spoilt in South Oz, though. So when it's not perfect, they don't surf. Like, I've had some of my best surfs ever and the locals have gone, 'Ah the wind's not quite right', but they can afford to be that fussy! They can just wait it out and check it every day, and at some times of the year, there are amazing runs of world-class waves." 🐦

AND ABOVE ALL, REMEMBER WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT

"Some people can get antsy after a while, so they head to Port Lincoln for the more touristy activities – nightlife and that sort of thing. It's the most populated area on that part of the coast, and during the right time of year a lot of people from the cities will head there, or to the other little hamlets you find when you're looking for waves. I don't really go in for that stuff though, especially in South Oz. If I'm there, I'm hanging with mates, rolling the swags out and having a fire. That's what home's about."

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James Holmer-Cross trying in vain to widen this
cavern with his bare mitts.
PHOTO: STU GIBSON

HOME IS
WHERE THE

HEART STARTS

THE TASMANIAN CHARGING ELITE WAX
LYRICAL ON A LIFE WILLINGLY LIVED TO
THE WHIMS OF A VICIOUS BEAST

 WADE DAVIS



They are the best in the world, at what they do. Nobody else in the world of surf can take on a stepped monster-slab like the Tassie boys. Nobody. Fuck, it's probably a case of nobody wanting to. I wouldn't want to; you probably wouldn't want to either. It's big and violent and dangerous and difficult and cold.

I flew to Hobart on a whim, landing early and cold. In May the temperature is already, usually, a single digit, and it was sluggishly tempestuous, alternating between cold and clear to cold and rainy, but without the thunderous fanfare that we're accustomed to on the mainland. The weather at the bottom of Australia's bottom just gets gradually moodier and more miserable.

Tasmanian surfing is mostly within striking distance of Hobart, which is a city of four main blocks and a reasonably sprawling suburbia built on fingers of cold water. The whole of Tasmania is set up like that; a coastline constantly broken by inlets and natural harbours. Clifton Beach, where the Shipsterns heroes live, is bordered by stagnant waterways, protected by headlands, and defined by its consistently small waves. The men who take on that step with impunity cut their teeth on two-footers.

As a city, Hobart is nice, in the way that cities in the extreme latitudes are nice. It seems hardy, the houses appear cosy, and the people are friendly and easy to talk to. The city centre is like a bigger, colder Taree and the outskirts are as gorgeous a rural landscape as you'll find anywhere. The suburbs have the air of an outpost, of a whaling station or something, and probably were one once.

But we didn't take ourselves to Australia's extreme to talk about the city; we went down to chat to the men who live and surf Shipsterns and Pedra Branca. It took a little organising, a few emails, a couple of calls, and I had to enlist the services of Stu Gibson to rustle the boys together, but on a rainy and windy Thursday night, the night before a solid swell was due to smash into Tassie's south coast, I sat with Stu, Marti Paradisis, James and Tyler Holmer-Cross and photographer Andrew Chisholm, and we had some Cascade beers and Chinese food and I sought to get to the bottom of precisely what it is that makes these guys do the things that they do. But first, I wanted to know their day jobs.

Marti Paradisis: Sales person at Budget car rental.

James Holmer-Cross: Kite flyer at Wallbrooke and Holmer Painting.

Tyler Holmer-Cross: I'm a painter.

Stuart Gibson: Apparent photographer.

Andrew Chisholm: Commercial fishing.

Tyler: We're hoping that tomorrow we can surf at Shipsterns, but it looks big and with real strong winds.

Marti: We know it's going to be on when a solid low-pressure system moves underneath the state. This one has come from out near West Oz and it's been pushing swell the whole way along the south of Australia. By the time it gets to us it seems like we're getting the raw deal of it; we always generally cop a bit of wind with swells. This time is no different to any other time – seems like it's going to come with about 30 knots of westerly wind that might turn offshore, hopefully.

Tomorrow is one of those days when you don't go to get perfect barrels, you go to get a big rank one and maybe an entry to the Big Wave Awards.

Stuart: On these big days it can be almost business-like, just trying to get the biggest waves, but these guys will also surf around there if there's nobody around.

Tyler: There are fun days at Shippies! When it's uncrowded, big and clean. You can get it fun at anywhere from 8 to 12 feet, but once it gets bigger than that it becomes less fun and more calculated.

Marti: The thing with Shippies is that the fun days are still dangerous. Holmer (James) ended up breaking his arm on the last 'fun' day we had. And if he didn't break his arm like that you would have thought it was a fun day. It's still a critical wave, no matter what size it is. It still has the punch to do whatever it wants to you.

It's a dangerous wave, 100 per cent. It's unpredictable. It's a slab, it's proper.

James: It's not just a slab, it's also got a couple of ledges to negotiate. You can be in a barrel and a step can pop up and you've got to choose your line. If you go too high you're just gunna get caught in the lip, and if you go too low you're gunna get guillotined. It's a mind game because you have to thread the needle.

Marti: If you blow it it's dangerous for heaps of reasons. A lot of people hit the bottom...

James: There are like these passageways where the water moves and you can feel it running along the bottom. You don't actually hit the rocks, but you follow the contours...

Marti: The turbulence is full on. When you're underwater you'll be getting sucked one way, but then there's a boulder there and you'll just get sucked the other way.

Tyler: I towed Mikey into one, and it must have been 20-foot, and he got flogged. What was crazy to watch was how quickly he got sucked down the point. Probably 200 metres in four or five seconds, it was just like boom and he was down the point with so much force. It just pushes you down the rocks, not away from them, so you're kinda near the rock shelf the whole time.

James: The setup is, you've got your slab, where it comes in and hits the shelf, and then you've got the step; but after that there's a 200-metre boulder point, and on the bigger days it rushes down, and because it's deep along that the waves just push down it.

Marti: You sort of always end up around the corner past the boulders, but if you're unlucky you can end up in the boulders and the next wave can just push you through them. Pretty much every decent day someone ends up there.

The same day that James broke his arm a booger got pushed in, not into the boulders, but into a cave, and he tried swimming both ways and couldn't get out; tried to go up and couldn't get out; and then when he was about to give up he just got sucked out of it by that turbulence.

While we've seen plenty of clips and photos of these guys surfing Shippies, it's almost like an alien sport to us regular surfers. It's dangerous, it has teeth and caves and sharks and cold water. So the question that needs to be asked is, why? Why do you go to all the lengths to get to a wave that's doing its darndest to kill you?

All: It's all we've got.

Marti: For us, that's our best wave. There's another wedge near here that's sick, but it rarely gets over four-foot. So, if you want to push yourself and find that

Mikey Brennan couldn't be there for our chat, but he had no problem being at the base of this Shipsterns monster. Actually, it's more likely that he had heaps of problems being there.
PHOTO: ANDREW CHISHOLM







Shaun Wallbank, from the crow's eye angle, tucking under a wave that looks small but is definitely not.
PHOTO: ANDREW CHISHOLM

bigger barrel, Shippies is our easiest spot. And I'll throw it out there, but these boys will vouch for it, when it's big it's one of the best waves in the world. You can actually get some of the biggest barrels going. As much as it is a mutated mess in some conditions, it can also be an amazing, perfect barrel.

James: We began our progress from the local beachies to Shipsterns when we got back from the Goldy. Marti and I went up there because we used to compete, so we went up and joined a boardriders up there, and just wanted to get better at surfing.

Stuart: Back in those days there was nothing down here. Not that there's much these days, but back then there was nothing to do with surfing.

Marti: As much as it sucks surfing with crowds, when you surf with good surfers it's going to be good for your surfing. If you're out there watching good surfers rip, then it's good for you. If you're an average surfer and you stay surfing with average surfers then it's going to be hard to get better – and that's the same with everything, be it motorcross, or even big wave surfing. If you're out there with surfers who are constantly pushing the level then

you're constantly improving. That's why we went to the Goldy.

James: I got out of the Goldy when I started hanging with Paul Fisher, and even crew who weren't really surfers, just getting into the partying. Then my mum got sick, and I flew back down, and just thought, What the fuck have I been doing? [italics] This place is amazing. And I've never had that feeling before, with goosebumps, just going back to somewhere that you actually belong, and I haven't thought about going anywhere since.

Marti: Every time you go away, every single fucking time, I appreciate coming back here more and more. Doesn't even matter where I've been. And even though the waves are horrendous, I still just love hoping that it's going to be good.

James: After the Goldy we started surfing Boneyards, and then Dave's Place, and then heard about Andy Campbell surfing Shippies. We felt ready for it, and after my first wave out there nothing else mattered anymore.

Tyler: There aren't really any intermediate waves around; it's either Shipsterns or nothing. There's

nothing really down here where you can cut your teeth. It's not like Margaret River where there are reefs everywhere.

So surfing Shipsterns is this mental thing. There's no natural progression, it's just like one day you're not surfing Shipsterns and then you decide that you are. It's like going from Coco Beach, Florida, to Backdoor Pipe.

Marti: We'd go there in the early days, and you'd just mind-surf these mutants, until it dawned on us that we could use a ski to get into position. (Mark) Matthews and them started coming down and doing it, and we were like, *Fuck, we have to start doing this.*

Stuart: You were on the dole, weren't you, when you got your first jetski?

Marti: I was on the dole and I got a loan off my old man, because the bank wouldn't give me one, and that was it. The boys helped out and gave me some cash after every session and that gave me money for fuel and insurance, and helped repayments and stuff, and that was it. We had one ski between us, and if we weren't on the ski we'd



Marti Paradisis works at the airport, renting people cars. Some of the people arrive to check out Shipsterns, know who he is, and get the best customer service imaginable when he advises them on how, and when, to get there.
PHOTO: STU GIBSON

be sitting in the channel or trying to paddle it.

I think for me, going back to the progression thing, I was always about the adventure side of surfing down here. We'd see a swell pop up, and load up the car with camping gear and just go and check it out. Before that, there was an older generation of surfers to us, but they'd just all stay at their local.

We fed off that thought of exploration for a while, and I remember when Campbo took me down to First Lookout with Chizza (Andrew Chisholm), and they were the biggest waves that I'd ever surfed, and after that we pretty much just surfed anything. These guys were on the cameras and they just made us put it in to anything.

James: While we were doing all this stuff we were filming each other, but then Gibbo and Chizza just started doing it flat out and that changed it all. We just started chasing it as a group after that.

Marti: We were just a group of friends feeding off each other and then we had mates in the fishing industry who would find waves for us – that's how Pedra (Branca) came about, we just

had a mate who saw it.

Stu: We all grew up together and partied together growing up, so it kinda made sense that we'd start surfing together.

Chizza: So back to the progression; there was a steep learning curve for us, from having never been there to shooting Marti the first few times there, and the surfing progressed with the confidence, to even just three or four surfs later – it was just unbelievable how quickly it happened.

We just wanted more and more out of each swell. So we needed the jetski, because they wanted to get the next big wave, and we'd always be surfing the strongest part of the swell, so we'd need it. Then we'd finally get the biggest part of the swell, be it at Shippies or Pedra, but it was all earned. Everything they've achieved at either spot they had to go and earn.

The Chinese food arrives and the lazy Susan is covered in clinking and clanging plates and cutlery. Given that everyone's now content with the spread, I dare ask the question of

whether they ever get pissed off seeing airs on two-foot Gold Coast waves run in magazines when they're out there throwing themselves into frigid mutants.

Tyler: Nah, we don't get pissed off. We know how the industry works, how brands will pay for advertising and want you to run certain things.

Stu: I think that what's popular in surf media goes in waves and right now the cool kid on the block doing the best air is going to get run. Three, four years ago there were paid freesurfers travelling the world chasing the biggest swells, but like anything, people get bored, or too saturated with it.

Tyler: Even though the big wave freesurfing thing has dried up in Australia it doesn't change what we do. We're down here and if there's a swell we're all over it.

Marti: As soon as my contracts started drying up I started having more fun. When the money wasn't around anymore I was kinda pissed off that I'd have to find a job; but I was happier than ever that I could just surf. It was a blessing, and now I'm

as passionate as I've ever been about surfing, at Shippies or wherever.

James: As you get older you don't really care about all that industry stuff and you only want to surf it when it's good.

Tyler: I just love seeing fucking sick photos; if it's paddle or tow, I just like seeing something huge.

Marti: You get a buzz out of the shots. There's something to show your achievements, you know? You get a nug out there, or make a mutant tow one, it's an achievement. I don't know if you can compare it to anything, so to get a photo or a film of that moment is special. You get all these old people saying crap about leaving your cameras at home, but you're capturing a moment, it's more than just trying to make money off it.

Tyler: I want to see images of the big waves because they keep me focused on trying to get more. They keep you on track, and so instead of getting on the piss all the time, you try not to do that as much and take it easy, so when the swell does pop up I can make the most of it.

For that you need to be fit and you need good equipment. You want to be surfing all the time and go to the gym, so that when the swell does pop up you're mentally prepared. And experience – the more you do it the more you're ready for it.

Marti: Being mentally prepared is massive. Once you doubt yourself then you can't do it. If you want to do it, anyone can get to that stage, no one can stop you, it's all in your head. Obviously you have to be competent in those conditions, but that's mental, too. To want to get fit you've got to have it in your head, too, to want to go to the gym, or get up and go for a run, or for a SUP, that's all mental, too. The whole thing is in your brain, even when it comes to getting a hold down, that's all upstairs, too. You need to know what to do to survive in those situations, but once it happens it's all down to how strong you are in your mind.

James: I broke my leg and my arm recently because I was slack. I wasn't surfing much, and I was unfit. I broke my arm and then didn't get fully healed, or fully fit, and then broke my leg. You've got to be fully fit. As soon as you're not fit you get something in the back of your brain that makes you doubt yourself, and once you doubt yourself you get hurt.

Tyler: With any big waves, as soon as you doubt yourself you're behind the eight ball, so you have to be 100 per cent confident with what you're doing and go for it. That's what I do, anyway.

Shipsterns is one thing, one mega fucked up thing, but further out to sea, in the middle of nowhere, is the wave they know as Pedra Branca. It's where the biggest waves in Australia have been ridden. It also seems like a massive, middle-ocean closeout. I ask them precisely what it is, and what else Tasmania has in store for adventurous surfers.

Chizza: Pedra's out in the middle of the ocean, and it's like four different waves. One can be perfect and the next'll just be a closeout.

Stu: One of our good mates who we grew up with is a cray fisherman, and out there is a pretty popular fishing spot. So he was out there on a big swell randomly, and he said that there's a bit of a wave out there. He surfs, so we trusted him, but we made a big call the first time we surfed it, and all the media

came down for it, and it turned out alright.

Pedra swells are the same as Shippies swells, but you just can't have any wind. I went out there the other day to fish, and it was forecast to be five knots, but ended up being more like 20 out there. It just gets heaps bigger than Shippies, because it's out in the middle of the sea.

Tasmania's called the island of potential I think... We've all been round it a few times and it's like the coast is so intricate that everything lines up on real rare conditions, different swell directions with odd winds, so everything is pretty rare. If you counted them all there are a fair few good waves, but it's just hard to get them.

It's a big place, and there are four coasts, but the west coast is howling onshore for three quarters of the year, and we've got mates who are cray fishermen and they scour the coast all year. We know what's out there, so the idea of having another three or four Shipsterns is not even an option.

Marti: It's also the bottom; I mean, every time we think that we've found a new nugget or something...

James: ...They should just legalise marijuana or something...

Marti: ...Yeah I reckon that I've got a good imagination or something, because every time I find something I get too excited, and I don't know if it was all my younger years smoking weed, but it never seems to be as good as I've worked it up to be.

Stu: I think up to two thirds of Tassie is heritage and a lot of that is on the west coast, which really restricts access. Access is the number one problem, unless you've got a boat or a helicopter. We haven't scoped it as much as we could have, but we know a lot of guys who are around there a lot. The same guy who told us about Pedra just sits out there for weeks on end, and he's seen big bommies and stuff, but nothing special.

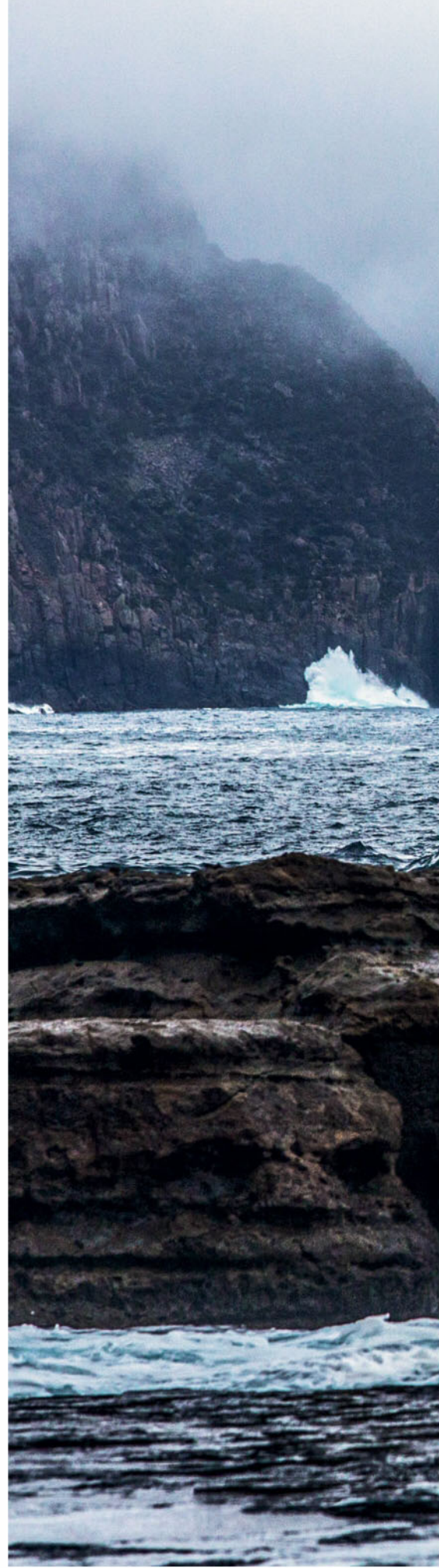
James: There are no Shipsterns, but if you think about it there are no other Shipsterns in Australia, or the world. There are no real 'step waves' like that anywhere, or at least not any that do it at that size.

Marti: The surf community down here is really diverse; there are people from all walks of life and we get to know each other because we're usually surfing the same spots when they're on. We have run into some issues with the whole 'exposure' kind of thing. And I understand it to an extent, but sometimes they just get a bit carried away. We like surfing uncrowded waves as much as the next guy, so we will generally keep certain areas on the low down. Other spots have been in the surf media for the last 30 years so it doesn't really matter. There was even an issue when we first surfed this island up the east coast, and we didn't name it, but it came out in the newspaper – Jim was actually working for them at the time – and he deliberately didn't name it, or named it something else, and in the end some dickhead exposed it and said where it was, just so his name was noted as knowing where it was. Y'know? He wanted to big note himself by saying, *Oh yeah I know where that is.*

We said that it was down the south-west or something, and he's come out and said, No it's not. It was just weird, and then Jim got the sack for naming it wrong!

James: Yeah...I diminished the integrity of The Mercury...

Stu: ...Quality bloody rag that one.



And here Marti is, negotiating the boulders, and the steps and the sharks and the cold and the sheer force and especially the fact that Stu and Chiz are going out of their way to do anything but give him praise.
PHOTO: ANDREW CHISHOLM





SHEDNINE



THANKS TO THE CREW FOR STAYING TRUE
THE STORE FOR THE CORE
362 DUNDAS ST RYE OCEAN BEACH

Tyler Holmer-Cross on a Big Wave Award winning wave that he won for this big wave. Pedra Branca, Middle of the Ocean, Bottom of Tasmania.
PHOTO: STU GIBSON



Other than knowing people and surfing with people there's no real organised surfing community in Tassie in my eyes. There's like two surfing clubs, but they're not even boardriders like on the mainland, they're just a group of people who have a contest every now and again. There's no real sense of community, no events. When you go up on the mainland you get kinda blown away by the boardriders' clubs up there. There's almost none of that down here.

Marti: There's no real surf community, but most of the Tassie surfers are a part of an informal, wider community. When you surf around the state there's a good chance that you'll know the other people in the lineup, when there are parties or events on, everyone gets along to it. We're all friends. Tassie's too small to have enemies.

I think that there aren't many organised boardriders clubs because the waves are so shit. That's what it comes down to. If you were trying to hold a comp down here, a local comp, you could hold it 360 days a year and it'd be absolutely crap. You could hold it on those five days and have a decent comp, but most of the time, if you want to hold it, you can pretty much guarantee, put hundreds of dollars on it, that it's going to be absolutely crap. Thousands, millions even.

It's always crap, and that's what got me out of doing comps because the waves are always crap.

We won't have a scene like those on the mainland until they put an artificial reef in at Clifton.

James: I look at my old boy and the other old boys, and they just love surfing by themselves; even if it's a closeout, they'd rather surf a closeout by themselves than surf perfect waves with other blokes. It's more of an outlet for them than anything else.

At this point we paused to chow down, the boys' appetites what you'd expect of young men at peak physical condition for what they choose to do. It got me thinking about them being the best in the world at what they do. Imagine if the boys lived somewhere else, where the waves aren't always monsters, maybe they could be the best in more conditions, maybe world-beaters.

James: The competition pushed us a lot. In the early years all I could think of was, I've got to get a better wave than Marti. It wasn't the be-all and end-all, but we're all driven and naturally competitive.

Stu: If we didn't all go down to Shippies, and Marti kept on surfing it by himself after Campbo, he'd still just be getting a few average ones and not much more. But what we've got instead is a core crew of about 20 mates who have all surfed it at some point, and without all of them, and without everyone carrying on and pushing each other, we

would never have gotten to the point where we are now. It definitely feeds off the crew.

Tyler: You see it going beyond us now; just the other day when it was pretty big, and I wasn't even surfing, just watching, you could see that the crew out there had the fire and they were just going ham and throwing themselves into the rankest waves. You could just tell that they wanted to make a name for themselves.

Marti: Today I was at work and I just started mind-surfing waves that I wanted to catch out there, that I wanted to paddle into, and part of it was thinking about my mates frothing on it. I wanted to do something that my mates could psych on. There were moments when I had so much adrenaline pumping through my brain, and I'm sitting at my work desk and my heart was racing that fast, fully frothing out, just wanting to stoke my mates out. You do it for yourself, but you also do it for your mates, to push them as well. The more that that happens, the more we progress.

Nowadays in the line-up the paddlers get all the priority. We've seen a million big waves get towed out there and that now doesn't do anything for our group at all. The progression for us is paddling the biggest waves possible. It's such a tiny little area, so if you've got your head down and you're paddling, you don't know if you're going to be able to get



Da boiz, exploring an island that they insist is fickle at best.
PHOTO: ANDREW CHISHOLM

that wave. But the paddler has priority. I'd rather see a paddler pull back than a tow-in get the wave. Towers can only whip into waves that are adamantly too big to paddle.

Stu: We're working out the boundary, but it's a grey area. That's the wave itself, it's not like Chopes where you know a tow wave from a mile away.

One thing that's never happened down here is Shippies getting overrun with rogue tow teams, like Jaws or Chopes, and I don't know why, maybe it's the cold thing, but you don't get people other than the guys we know come down – other than boogers, but they don't matter – but since back in the day everyone used to come through us, stay with us, no one would just turn up. Maybe it's because you can't get a ski.

There are lots of boogers down there these days, but they've got no money so they can't afford skis, not that they need them.

Marti: Shippies (let alone the whole state) is fickle. Because we are so close to the storm activity, it's near impossible to pick out the perfect day in advance. Conditions and forecasts can change in an instant. I hope it never gets like Chopes and Jaws and all that. It can't handle it. It's not like those places where there's a fairly big lineup, with heaps of waves breaking. The take-off zone at 'Stern is the size of a station wagon, and only certain waves are any good that break there. If it's too small or hits too wide, it won't break. If it hits too deep or on the wrong angle, it's just shit. Then if it's a mutated mess, you gotta tow it.

There's yet to be a day out there, where there's been anger or violence in the lineup and fingers crossed there never will be. We expect people to be respectful to the place and the people who surf there. If ya wanna come surf it, by all means do it. But come in a respectful way. Don't bring the whole tribe (more people equals less waves for yourself and everyone else). Have a look around, the place is beautiful, appreciate where you are. Don't litter, if you see rubbish, even if it's yours, pick it up.

Introduce yourself to the crew, and wait ya turn.

Tyler: There are way more young bodyboarders than there are surfers, and there are all these young bodyboarders coming up, but not really any surfers who want to surf Shippies.

Marti: They have such an advantage, they can get in them really easily, but they don't hassle us or mess with our waves, because they know that they can get into any of them, where for the standups it's only really specific waves that offer an entry point.

We're mates with all those guys – we party with them and surf with them all the time, so there's no issue. They froth on us getting a good wave as much as we froth on them. They're hooting when we paddle into a nug, they get psyched on it.

Tyler: After a good session we drink some beers; sink a few on the boat home.

Chiz: But once we're done and having a few beers we're more paying everyone out than congratulating each other. Absolute banter.

Stu: Chiz and I really fuel the banter, so every day we're out there we'll choose a favourite between Jim and Tyler, because they've got a mad rivalry. So every wave that Jim gets we'll just be going, YEEEEHHHH! And when Tyler gets one we won't say anything, or vice versa. It's the same with Marti as well...

Marti: ...They're cunts to me. I'm real gullible, so I just take it. They tell me that I'm a pussy, or that I'm pulling back on too many, and I believe them.

Stu: We've got this one good mate, he rides a bodyboard but he's not a bodyboarder at all, he'll get the most hoots out of anyone. He'll go anything, and when he does the whole line-up, all the boats will just erupt and cheer for him. He can hardly hold a rail, but will go anything, and will come in and skol beers afterwards.

Thing is for us, as we're getting older, we hardly see each other anymore unless there's a Shippies swell, so it's almost like a party out there, like a gathering.

The next morning I got up well before light and drove out of Hobart and past Port Campbell and to the Shipsterns walking track. The road was littered with dead-and-alive wallabies and potoroos, as was the walking track,. There wasn't another human within any perceptible nearness to me, and while the environment was loud, with all its crashing waves and wind-rustled leaves, it was seemingly silent and utterly gorgeous.

I walked to the lookout and watched the angry ocean extinguish itself against the ledge and then the step and then the boulders and then the rock shelf. Nobody was out there yet, as the wind still wasn't right. I watched the Southern Ocean relentlessly try and chip away at the island of Tasmania, and noticed how the lofty cliffs stood bravely fighting an unwinnable fight. Sooner or later, actually very, very much later, the ocean would eat its way into the cliffs and reclaim the intruder that is the island. The ocean is relentless, has limitless backup, and time on its side.

Crows rode wind currents along the cliffs and stared at my eyes as if they were tasty snacks. All around me was an amphitheatre of Australian bush that was rustling and cheering every time a wave would kamikaze itself and die a beautifully violent death onto the rocks, like a packed crowd at the Colosseum buzzing over death.

Shipsterns Bluff didn't care that the boys weren't out there yet. It was going to continue dancing its beautifully violent dance regardless of whether the humans bothered to come and play with it or not. What struck me was that, in addition to shaping the way Tasmanians surf, it also gave tutelage to their attitude towards the spectacle. Like this marvellous wave, the Tassie boys were going to continue pushing their own and collective limits, even if the rest of the surf community stop watching. This is their home, and for these fellas it's where the heart starts. 🐨



COME ON A SURF TRIP TO THE BANYAKS!

The Banyak Islands are one of the last surf frontiers of Indonesia.

Just north of Nias, the islands of Bangkaru ("Treasure Island") and Tuangku (home of the "Bay of Plenty") hold a number of world-class waves and there is still more exploring going on. There are left and right-handers ranging from long deep barrels, fast and hollow down-the-line peelers, perfect peaks to long cruising walls with plenty of time to rip the faces apart. You're likely to get more great waves on the trip than in months of surfing at home.

Untouched natural rainforest, wildlife, epic Sumatran sunsets, remote islands and warm tropical waters await you. You can also go fishing, snorkeling, spearfishing, or jungle-trekking – no mass tourism here, just fun and adventure in a comfortable, air-conditioned motor yacht.

It's the adventure of a lifetime in one of the last untouched surfing destinations!

**SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2015 SPOTS
AVAILABLE AND 2016 FILLING UP FAST!**

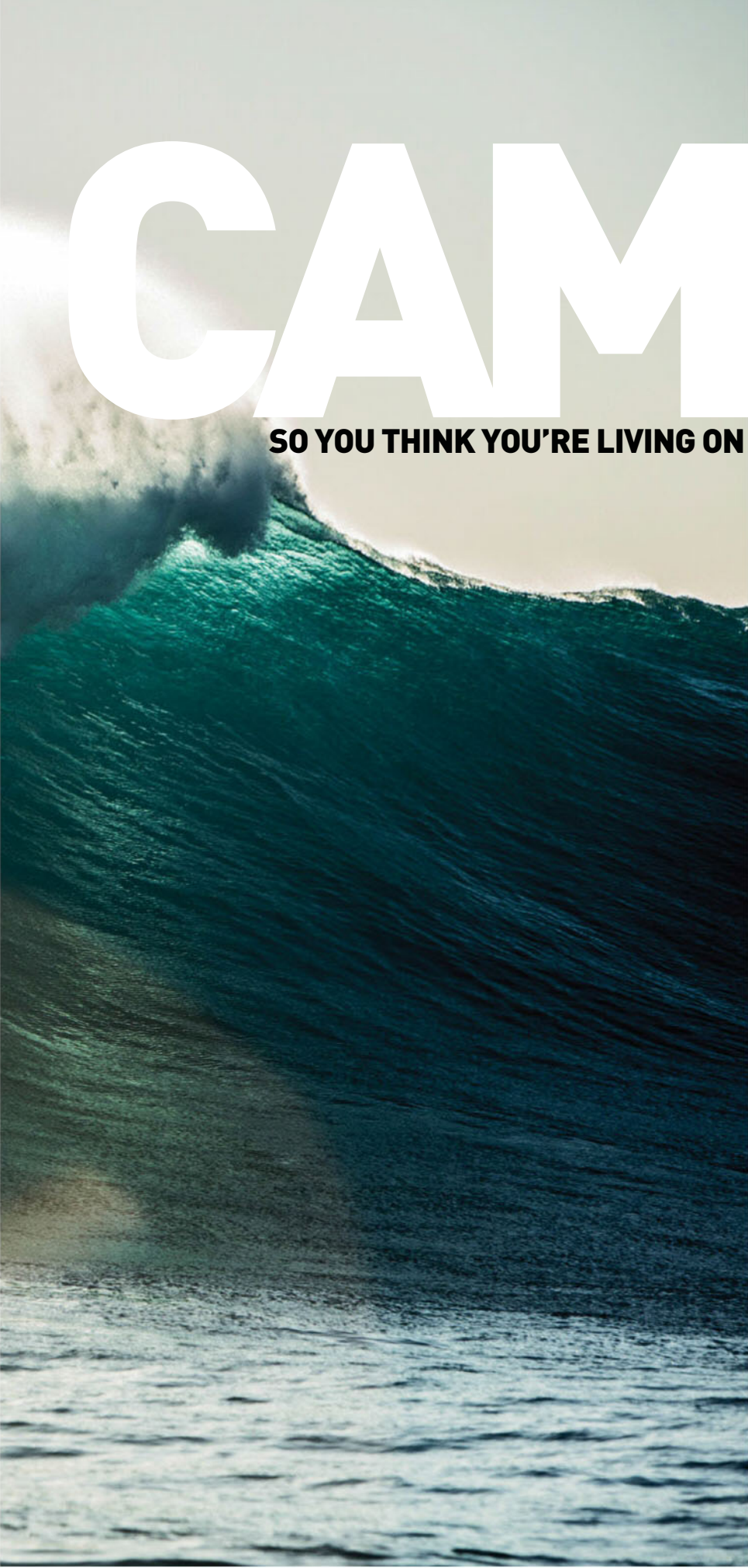


Surf Banyak II – "Seriti", a 25m aluminium crew boats sleeps up to 10 surfers (standard – 12-person trips available on request) on spring beds in two air-conditioned cabins.

Spacious and comfortable, it features an air conditioned saloon with two large sofas, tables and TV/video/music entertainment area. The Seriti is one of the safest charters operating in Indonesia, with a full suite of equipment including life rafts and life jackets, smoke detectors, EPIRB; CO2 emergency fire system; VHF and SSB radios, satellite telephone (available to guests), and a 10,000 litre fresh water tank. It has 3 x 525hp Detroit V12 Turbo Intercooled engines running at a maximum speed of 15 knots (cruising speed 10-12 knots). We have a live on professional photographer with packages available to purchase that will make all your friends envious of your surfing adventure.

A man's not a camel, but this Camel sure is one helluva man. In his element, paddling something big and ugly.
PHOTO: JAMIE SCOTT





CAMEL

 RYAN JONES

SO YOU THINK YOU'RE LIVING ON THE FRINGE? YOU'RE NOT.

There are some people who put their whole existence into surfing. They make it their life, their livelihood, their purpose, and all of their actions relate back to it at all times. They start young and surf all through their youth. They cut class, choose surfing as a sport and never miss a boardriders. All their friends are surfers, part of a tribe of whippet-thin, bleached-blond spider-monkeys terrorising the neighbourhood. They mature, maybe compete in pro juniors and have a shot at a few QS events. They don't make it all the way, but they score a job in the industry, and Yeah! they feel like they've got their life sorted out, having geared it around surfing as much as is humanly possible. They get up for every early and bolt out of work before sunset. They spend thousands on boat trips with the boys and make their girlfriend/boyfriend/wife/husband/life partner travel to ridiculous places for a 'holiday'. They pay \$900 on brand new Mayhems that they've just GOT to have. They soccer-dad their kids into becoming surfers. They ensure the cycle continues.

None of this is a bad thing. Surfing is the best pastime you can have and there's nothing wrong with wanting to immerse yourself in the whole damn thing as much as you possibly can. There are people like that, people that do all of the above, and that's totally fine. But then, there's Camel. No matter how much you think you live and breathe surfing; how you believe it to be your be all and end all, your one true love, your passion, the fire in your loins... you'll never be Camel.

"I was born in Busselton, the largely surfless side of Cape Naturaliste, in south-west Western Australia. My dad was a surfer, so I started seeing surfboards when I was a toddler, but I probably didn't stand up on a board until I was about 13. I surfed a lot around Gracetown and Cowaramup when I was younger; a really wave-rich little zone. It was definitely a lot less crowded back then; far fewer surfers when compared to now."

As we discussed in the previous issue of Surfing Life, the Margaret River region is on the radar for the affluent, non-surfer-turned-SUP-turned-mal-rider market and has been experiencing demographic change for some time. Whilst the region is experiencing this at a comparatively slower pace when compared to its east coast counterparts, for someone with a penchant for solo water time like Camel, the writing was on the wall a long time ago and the desire to chase life on the fringes and frontiers of surfing shaped the direction of his surfing life.

"I surfed in the south-west all through my teen, high school years, but when I finished school I didn't really have any plans. I was shaping a few boards here and there but didn't have much of a direction. For many years when I was young, I could tell, I just knew for a fact that Margaret River was going to become really crowded and experience a lot of change in the coming years. I knew that I wouldn't like that. So I decided to head to Indonesia in 1995, when I'd been out of school for maybe two or three years. Within two weeks of heading to Indo I had found my way to G-Land, and I made sure I was there for the



PHOTO: MICK WATERS

next seven winter seasons. I guess I invented the surf guide job in my time at G-Land. There was no one doing it before me. I kind of just stayed put, stuck it out there and shaped the job around me. I was mad about it. I caught malaria at some stage, and I got really sick at times, but I just kept going back. It nearly killed me, but I just kept going back. In hindsight I probably should have rested a bit more and looked after my health, but I was just in love with the place and the wave and the people, and I couldn't stop myself."

The stories of Camel's time in Grajagan's Plengkung jungle are legendary – mythological to an extent. His actions, primarily just his way of living and looking at life, helped to create a legendary status amongst a generation of travelling surfers. Life on the fringe, however, takes its toll. As the pressures and realities of life in the jungle caught up with Camel, the temptation and desire to get back to his familiar, and desired, home country grew, parallel to and with influence from the growing crowd numbers at his beloved G-Land. For many people, after a stint this long off-the-grid, packing up and joining the 'real world' would be the next step, with the comforts and conveniences of modern society being a reward for an extended third-world sabbatical. But not for Camel; the allure of the fringe only grew.

"In the end I came home due to an immigration issue. It turned out that I had been in Indonesia for 13 months as an illegal immigrant with an expired

visa, and the longer I overstayed my welcome the more scared and paranoid I became. It was around the Schapelle Corby case and the Bali Nine being caught, and I was like, *It's time to get out of here!* I was more aware of the laws in Indonesia and I didn't agree with a lot of them. By that time I had become more than accustomed to their way of life; I spoke the language and could live as a local. Some people would come over and blow \$5000 in two weeks, but I made \$5000 last for a year or more, with change! People's attitudes toward me, over there, changed because I wasn't a 'tourist' anymore. In the end, I was ready to come home. I had seen enough and didn't like the feeling of being on the run.

"I can't actually tell you how I got back. It's a secret that I've refused, quite a few times, to tell. It's a bit of a can of worms. God, it's a movie screenplay! Let's just say that I was lucky. Very lucky. I made it back to Australia and I didn't get penalised. I could have gone to jail and been in a lot of shit over there, so when I got to Australia I was just like, *I'm not going back. I've done my time in the jungle, that close to the law, I just want to be in a place where I don't have to worry... where I don't need a visa, I don't need a passport, and I can't just get arrested for existing.* So I've stayed put ever since. I realised that there were so many places in Australia that I hadn't been, so I did that. I spent a lot of time around Exmouth, Carnarvon, Kalbarri, Walpole, and then after a few years I got myself over to South Oz, where I really

wanted to be. That was the ultimate goal."

You get the feeling that Camel's whole life has been a lead-up to the path he travels now. The time spent learning the inside of perfect, left barrels; the time spent living off small amounts of money and stretching it as far as possible; the time spent shaping, chopping down and re-shaping boards to suit whatever perfect wave he's camped in front of... he's well-equipped for a life in the far reaches of the Australian desert. Even the cadence of his speech matches the pace of life he lives: each word is carefully considered and approved in his head before it passes his lips. There's not one sentence that reaches your ears that isn't laced with meaning. Camel says what he means and means what he says.

"I bought my block of land in South Australia about 18 years ago, so it's taken me a fair while to get my shit together and prepared for the move, but I've been here about three years now. I knew that I wanted to go to South Oz, the last outpost with really good waves. I think it's the holy grail of waves in Australia. People think that I pack up and chase swells all the time, but really, I like to stay in places for a fair bit of time, like a month, or two or three months. I like to strategically position myself in the spot for the right time. It's a different level of travelling, basing yourself there for a while. I don't have a problem with pitching up somewhere for ages. Last year I was based where my land is and then I did a couple of months in Penong, where the

It takes a special type of lunatic to live and breathe these monsters, and Camel's about as special as lunatics get. We hope he never hangs up paddle board.
PHOTO: JASON CHILDS



famous Cactus is, then I went up to Kalbarri and did three months there, and then I have been back here ever since then. But now it seems like I am stuck here for the moment. I don't really have a way out. I believe my car is in a bit of a rough way (Camel's beloved 1991 modified Toyota Landcruiser Troop Carrier, that's done 430,000kms - Ed) so I might just stay here instead of driving to Western Australia and potentially getting stuck."

It would seem that through a mix of real desire, and potential mechanical failure, after quite a few years of a more nomadic lifestyle, Camel may have found a place to call home – a place that suits his needs of solitude and perfect surf. It just so happens that this place is a South Australian outpost, characterised by a harsh landscape, surrounded by frigid water filled with some of the largest White Sharks in the world, and a local population that usually doesn't take too kindly to new faces around town, and definitely not in the line-up. The problem for potentially grumpy and insular locals in this part of the world, though, is that you can't help but like Camel. He's kind, friendly and considerate and, in his own way, dryly charismatic... and if that doesn't work, he'll charge harder than the lot of them.

"It's definitely not easy down here. It's hardcore. There's no one here. If you get lonely, if you don't like too much of your own company, or if you want to tune chicks, party or meet new people... it's not for you. You have to give up a lot of stuff to

stay here. You have to make sacrifices. There are a small number of people I surf with, but most people are pretty private down here. Most of them are hardcore surfers, but they aren't into getting a group together. They want to surf with the least amount of people they can; they definitely didn't let me in quickly and easily and, you know, it takes a really long time to be included in anything, but I appreciate that! The longer it takes me to meet everyone the better, I think. There are about 200 local people here and I think, you know, if I meet the 200 people here in the first week, that won't be as interesting as taking five years to meet everyone. I might as well meet a new person every month. I don't want to meet them all at once; I don't want to hurry things.

"A lot of the local guys don't want to see new people surfing in the area, and they definitely don't want to see cameras. But guys like Andrew Brooks, they think that if they don't document it then there's a whole generation of surfing down here going unrecorded; an era going undocumented. We've got shots from the '70s, '80s and '90s, so what's stopping us from doing it now? And I tend to agree. This is Australian surfing history and there are new waves and spots being surfed, on bigger and bigger swells, and someone has to document it. The natural barriers for tourism, particularly surf tourism, are enough I think."

The biggest natural barrier, firmly in local surfers'

minds, and the entire country's collective mind when thinking about surfing in these waters, is the Great White Shark. With three fatal shark attacks in South Australian waters in the last 10 years, half a dozen non-fatal attacks, including one within the last six months, and a majority of spots being shelving reef breaks with deep water channels surrounding them, being attacked and killed is unsurprisingly on a lot of people's minds. It's the manner of dealing with this reality that makes Camel's surfing existence markedly different from the majority of surfers.

"Mate, it's very, very, very sharky. It's quite a serious problem. Most of the locals are really aware of sharks and are pretty cautious, and people surf when it's really good. But if it's not pumping they won't risk it. There are some guys I know that have girlfriends, or are married and have little kids, and they have to take that into account before they go surfing. *Do I really want to surf that spot when my wife and kids are at home waiting for me?* That kind of thing. The shark cage diving is only 100kms away and you look at the statistics and there's five or 10 or 20 sharks there every day. Some of the spots you surf have islands covered in seals. It's full on, but I've got a pretty relaxed attitude to the sharks. I'm devoted to surfing; I surf all the time and it could definitely happen. I won't be surprised if a shark eats me, and my whole life is set up around that. I feel like I've already died and I'm living on borrowed time, so I figure I would rather die doing this than anything



PHOTO: ANDREW BROOKS

else. I've come to a pretty cool acceptance in my mind, really. The guys down here that film and shoot photos of me surfing, like Mick Waters and Andrew Brooks, I always tell them, *You film me, and sooner or later I am going to get eaten by a shark, and this is why your footage is going to be valuable because what I am doing, what we're doing, is high risk, and eventually if I am eaten by a shark it's cool.* Compared to the majority, I would be in the lesser scared category when it comes to sharks, but the fear is still there; you're crazy if it's not."

Surfing Life are self-confessed giant pussies. We consider anything over four-foot pretty solid, and anything over six-foot downright scary. Camel, well, he doesn't seem to have a problem with wave size at all, just like many of the Australians we find living on the fringes. The hunt for bigger and more perfect surf is one of the major reasons he's continued his journey, and begun to settle down, in more solitary confines. Over the last few years he's, unintentionally, become a force to be reckoned with in the Surfing Life Oakley Big Wave awards – a consistent finalist in the Paddle-In and Big Wave category over the past four years. It's been both a privilege, and somewhat of a novelty, to share in Camel's company in Sydney, the 'big smoke', not to mention granting him \$10,000 for two, back-to-back, Biggest Paddle-In titles in 2012 and 2013 – we can only guess how long he made that coin last.

"We've got a pretty good big wave scene down here. I was into surfing big waves in Margs, but it's another level down here. We have a good crew; Heath Joske and Sam Jervis and myself. They don't

have the life vests like a lot of big wave guys these days, they're just hardcore big wave surfers."

Unsurprisingly, fitting with Camel's outlook on life and his relationship with the ocean, in big waves, paddle surfing rules over jetski-assist.

"Oh yeah, we're still all about paddling. I towed into a couple of big ones down here the other week and saw the photos after and it looked huge, but I wouldn't have even had a clue it was a big one because it was ridiculously easy. We saw a lump, the guy whipped me in, someone took a photo and that was that! I didn't have to do anything, I may as well have had my eyes shut! There are some guys around that don't surf for months on end, then they'll do one tow session, post the photos all over the internet and think they're heroes... but the other guys, the hardcore guys, are paddling in every swell they get the chance to, with no vests. That's what it's about. I think I'm at the stage where I might be retired from the BWA now though, especially when I look at the young guys who are paddling way harder than me and charging harder than me. I just enjoy surfing with them and pushing myself further, and if I can pass on some knowledge it feels like it's worthwhile."

The knowledge Camel has to pass on is not only worthwhile, but also pretty much endless. A life on the fringe brings with it a unique perspective on what it means to be not only a surfer, but also a part of society. Camel views the rest of us, and the world, from the outside in and it could be argued that he has his priorities more in order than anyone, despite the innate hardships of life in the desert.

"I just want to keep on surfing these waves and hiding out. I don't want to take on life with a job or a family just yet, that's not for me right now. I can't think of anything else I want to do! Every now and then I get bored with the constant chasing and waiting, and I might take a few diversions and I might have a few too many drinks here and there, but then I'll go *Fuck, what am I doing!? Chase the swell more!* As long as I'm looking at the forecast and seeing another swell on the way then life's good. That's all I want to do."

When I run into Heath Joske in March of 2015, on the North Straddie ferry of all places, we talk of his new life in the South Australian desert, and of course, sharing sessions and time with Camel. Upon first mention of Camel's name, Heath's eyes light up; he beams a huge, toothy grin through his growing beard. All he can manage is a wry shake of his head, as can I, and we smile and nod knowingly. Aware that we're privileged to know and have spent time with Camel. He beams at just the mention of his new friend and partner in cold-water crime. I've had this reaction many times from many different people who've crossed paths with him. Camel, whether he likes the attention or not, is in the business of making people happy, and fuelling their fire for the hunt of perfect waves... because no matter where you are or what you're doing, you know that Camel is only one bumpy dirt road and a long, sharky paddle from standing tall and alone in a huge, blue cavern, and that's all that matters to him. 🐋

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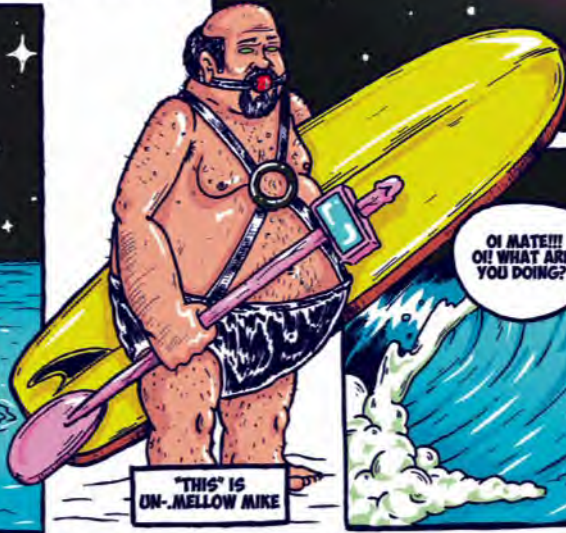
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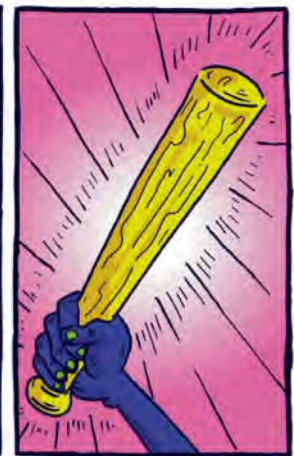
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AND HE'S LAID AN EGG IN OUR FRONT YARD...



BRINKLEY DAVIES

THE CONSERVATIONIST, THE MARINE BIOLOGIST AND THE
GORGEOUSLY TALENTED SOUTH AUSTRALIAN SURFER, WHO SPENDS
HER DAYS CHASING SHARKS AND CHASING CHANGE.

 MIMI LAMONTAGNE

Brinkley Davies is slender, with soft but prominent features, light blonde hair, fair skin and big blue eyes. Although clearly fit and healthy, she looks as if she could be blown away with a slightly above average gust of wind. But her petite figure does not match her personality.

Brinkley Davies is fearless. She's talented enough in the water to be a professional surfer, and for years she competed, but at one point that was given up to chase something more... and that something more turned out to be sharks. Brinkley Davies literally chases sharks.

I call her around 10am on Tuesday morning. She answers. "Hey! Sorry! I just got back from a run and I'm absolutely puffing – hope you can understand me!"

She's just walked in the door to her home in Port Lincoln, South Australia. Although she hasn't always lived there. Originally from just south of Adelaide, Brinkley grew up between there and Yorke Peninsula, where her surfing began. And from her surfing sprang a love for the ocean, and a curiosity for the animals inside it, which in turn led her to a degree in marine biology. She graduated in 2014, and almost immediately was offered a job on a Great White Shark boat. Which leads us to the present: Brinkley catching her breath on a phone call from Port Lincoln.

"Yeah, moving was huge for me. It's so rural here, and there's heaps of amazing coastline, but basically no people. It's really just raw, open ocean. And even though the general saying is that Port Lincoln is the main city around here,

it's definitely not a city. There's, like, one set of traffic lights. But it's the biggest commercial fishing town in Australia, which means that there's a tonne of money. A tonne. There are more millionaires here than any town, per capita, in the rest of the country. People have ridiculous money here, apart from me! Hah. But yeah, I work on a shark cage diving boat, and when that business is slow I work with the sea lion dives, which is really cool."

I found it odd that Brinkley, a marine biologist, works on a cage diving boat – a controversial industry that's known to aggravate sharks, as well as the potential association of humans and food (humans = food). "The company that I work for doesn't use burley and bait – they use acoustics to attract the sharks. But at Neptune Island, where the boats go, sharks are always there, so really, if you drop the cage in you've got a pretty good chance of seeing at least one. They're curious of you, and the boat and the motor, so they're attracted anyways. But back in February we had Orcas come through this area and they killed two Great Whites, so we didn't see any Great Whites for close to two months. They didn't come back for a long time, and the cage diving kept operating, so it was pretty tedious. But then when they came back in April, a guy that I know down here was attacked at a local break. His leg was bitten off, and he's still in hospital. I was actually on my way down to paddle out at that same break, and then saw him getting in the ambulance. It was pretty hectic. It's the first attack here in a

while, but where he was surfing, Fisheries, is our local and it's really, really sharky.

"It's such a political thing down here, the sharks. And the cage diving, too. People are so strongly opinionated about it, and I've lived in SA my whole life, but I've never been somewhere where people's opinions divide the community. This is a commercial fishing town and there are people that send death threats bagging out cage diving, when they're essentially doing the same thing on commercial fishing vessels. I know a lot of people that work in tuna and crayfish and they use burley and bait, and I can guarantee that pointers follow their boats. I don't agree with burley and bait, so I made sure that who I was working for was in line with my moral beliefs. The sharks are starving, and when a shark attacks something they roll their eyes back into their head and a protective layer comes out, and you see that with operators that throw chum into the water – aggression, beared teeth and a lot of blood. The sharks around our cage have never, ever done that.

"But people are aggressive about their opinions because it's a reality down here that there are sharks, heaps of sharks, and people will get attacked. People think that there's some big solution, but the thing is that the sharks live here, and I understand we're going in their environment – the only way we can mitigate the risk is to learn more about them. Down here, there are a lot of people that would happily go out and shoot Great Whites. But it's hard to explain what it's like down here

PHOTO: WILL ADLER



PHOTO: KANE OVERALL

This is the fringes issue and in it
Brinkley is on the brink of a barrel.
PHOTO: KANE OVERALL



without living here. I mean, last year my boyfriend was sitting next to his friend in the water off Elliston and his friend was launched, like, 10 metres into the air by a Great White. That happened, and then Chris, who lost his leg – we need to start learning more about the sharks, because this will continue to happen. But it's not easy to talk to people about it.

"Before I moved over here I wasn't sure what I wanted to do. I started an awareness foundation with my friend Natalie, called Keiko Conservation, which is basically a platform to show the world all the hectic stuff that happens to animals – dolphins getting captured in the wild and slaughtered; there are so many things like that. So I've been doing that, and will continue, but after seeing the Orcas come through and drive the sharks away, I've decided that at some point I'd like to go back into study for a PhD. When the Orcas came through the sharks totally left, and that might be a solution to this huge problem. Great Whites are scared of Orcas – they're their only predator – and it's an area that hasn't been looked into. It's the one thing that naturally occurs in the ocean that deters Great Whites! Even if it's just a little bit of help, at least it's something. Because right now, there's nothing. And down here it's an even higher level of risk because of how remote the breaks are. Most of the time you're in the water, you're out with no more than 10 people. A lot of people surf on their own, and you're pretty far away from help if you get in trouble – hours from hospital and most of the time it's a 4WD track, or close to it. It's a pretty high risk of everything down here, and it needs to be improved. I want to be a part of improving that. I've just gotta figure out how, first."

And the Keiko Conservation is Brinkley's first major step towards her goals. Over the past few months she's been using social media to promote the brand, and by the time you'll be reading this article, she'll be in Hawaii working with Natalie to

launch a full-blown campaign. "Instagram is like a free newspaper, and everyone is engaged with it on their phones. What I want to do with Keiko Conservation is create engaging content that shows the problems – travel to the places that do these horrible things, document it and put it on social media. From China to Indo to Africa, and anywhere else. And not only the bad stuff! There are so many smaller organisations that are doing awesome things, but don't have the marketing or awareness to get enough money to make a big difference. And, there are so many people with a lot of money who just don't know where to donate. That's where I want to come in."

As we mentioned earlier, Brinkley had (and has) the skills to be a professional surfer, but gave it up in pursuit of something else. "I competed for a long time, and it was really fun and I loved it, and I actually did really well (she won SA State Titles multiple times). But where I surfed and learnt to surf was so amazing, such raw, beautiful ocean – the marine life is everywhere, and that influenced me a lot. I mean, you're constantly in this environment that you totally rely on for your happiness, because surfing really becomes your whole life, not just a sport. And there are so many people that surf but don't really care about looking after the ocean. That's why I steered away from competitive surfing. I could have focused and spent all my money and time trying to make the Tour, but I figured that there were 100 other people doing that, and none of them were contributing to ocean conservation. David Rasta, Kelly Slater and Rob Machado – those are the only people I can think of that have really put in an effort to conserve the ocean. And it's like, these people are relying on it for their job, their career, for everything – they make millions of dollars – and yeah, the Tour is awesome, but if the ocean all of a sudden gets out of balance from

an oil spill or something like that, their careers are gone. It's naïve to not be involved when you rely on it so much. And that's why I chose to not be a part of that. I used to feel so accomplished when I won something, but it's nothing like the feeling I get when I'm surfing with huge pods of dolphins or free-diving and that stuff."

And very naturally, this leads us to her object of Objectification, the King of the Oceans, Mr Kelly Slater. "He's such a well-known figure in surfing, and is so incredibly talented in the water, yet he's turned his career into focal points. I like that. I like the fact that he promoted Blackfish and had Orcas on his board, speaking about it on social media. There's no one else that's done that, and it made Kelly go up about 1000 levels in my book. He knows what's going on outside of the surfing world. He's got a million people that would message him and he could easily not give a shit about anything, but he gets involved in things that are bigger than him. Things in the real world – the Orcas, health, everything. I've eaten super healthy as a vegan for ages, and I love how Kelly's an ambassador for chia seeds. I mean, he's a freak at surfing and could probably win another five titles if he wanted, but he's become his own brand and is focusing on helping the world. He's had over 20 years of killing it on Tour and now he's a humanitarian. Half the Tour is so self-absorbed, and it's a totally self-absorbed Tour because everyone's in it for themselves, and that's awesome, but Kelly's taken his fame and put it into things that really matter. That's really awesome, and rare."

As we said, Brinkley Davies is fearless. She's put herself out there as someone who wants to make a difference – someone who wants to make an impact on the world – and in our opinion, having such high expectations for yourself is even scarier than chasing sharks. 🐋

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Sophie, right? Where'd that name come from?

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A few years ago I went and stayed on the island of Kauai for a few months. I lived in a house towards the end of the road on the north end of the island. It's pretty remote out there, with the Na Pali Coast (that bit of land that's uninhabited and you can hike through and it's fucking amazing) basically right next to us, and there wasn't much interaction with the outside world. The friend I lived with smoked weed, and I don't mean casually – I mean very, very habitually – so naturally, I did too. And things got weird. We didn't eat much aside from brownies and coconuts, we slept on the beach almost every night, and we drank a lot of whiskey. I even met a girl who had Jack Daniels tattooed on her right bum cheek. Those few months are now all a bit fuzzy, but I remember at one point, after eating and drinking coconut all day long, thinking that I wanted to be made of coconut. I wanted to wear it; I wanted to be it (like I said, things got weird). Now, even if you're not a habitual weed smoker living in a remote part of a small island, you can be a coconut, kind of, if you want to. At least you can wear it, because Vissla has just released a brand new boardshort made from coconut husk and upcycled polyester (i.e. plastic bottles). And if I were a man I'd buy them, because although I would never repeat those months in Kauai, I look back on 'em quite fondly. Now, go get nutty with your coconut clothes, available this July. – **ML**
vissla.com

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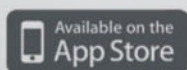


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A long, long time ago, almost in another lifetime now it seems, I went to a music festival called Parklife in Sydney. I didn't concern myself that the festival was on a Saturday evening and I had to work first thing on a Monday morning; that was a problem for Future Ryan to worry about! So I drove down on a Friday afternoon after work and spent the Saturday partying; I had a nice, cozy sleep-in Sunday, ate some lunch and decided to start my drive back to the Gold Coast at around 3pm in the afternoon. Future Ryan was now Present Ryan and was a complete idiot! I found myself at Grafton at around 9.30pm where I stopped to make a phone call – responsible, right!? Upon turning the key to continue my trip, I found I had a flat battery. A call to NRMA and a two-hour wait later, I was back on my way, with a Burleigh Heads ETA of around 2am. As I was passing the Kingscliff turnoff around 1.30am – on the home stretch – I looked at my passenger seat and saw my best mate, Matt, sitting there. He was actually chatting away and asked me if I was going to surf in the morning. Weird, huh!? So, politely I answered him. It was at that point that the sound of my voice woke me up and, as I was careening toward the metal guardrail, I realised that Matt was just a sleep-induced mirage and I had, in fact, been unconscious for about 10 seconds. There's only one type of mirage you want, and that's Rip Curl's comfortable, stretchy, simply yet beautifully designed boardshorts. But these instead of a music festival ticket, it'll end up killing you. – RJ
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Mother nature needs protecting, but we're not saying that you need to become an eco-terrorist and start burning down Gina Rinehart's mining facilities (or are we!?), or even go completely bat-shit crazy and buy a Prius. Just get a Surf Jimmy and start saying goodbye to plastic bags forever, because the alternative is tantamount to kicking a turtle square in the face. – SZ
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REEF EXIT

If you haven't seen it Reef's EXIT yet, do yourself a favour and head over to reef.com/exit to check out the goodness. Filmed entirely on the road, EXIT captures the energy and experiences of Reef Ambassadors' unscripted lived throughout Japan, the Caribbean, Mexico, Indonesia and Europe. Reef's is a team filled with good blokes and damn good surfers; Fanno, Crewsy, T-Knox, Machado, Dorian, Luke Davis, Nick Rozsa and Evan Geiselman - guys who are constantly on the road and live by the 'Just Passing Through' philosophy. In EXIT, The locations are incredible, but the surfing is even better. Reef, themselves, are pretty damn good blokes too, and to reinforce this they're giving away three pretty epic prize packs to celebrate the launch of EXIT, worth over \$280.

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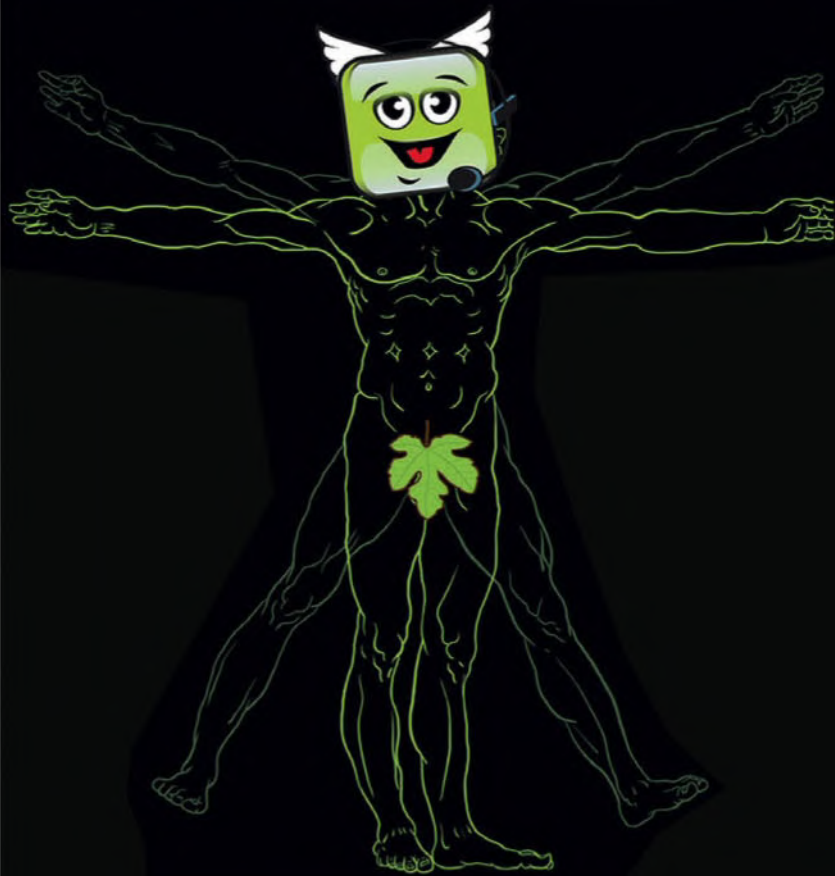
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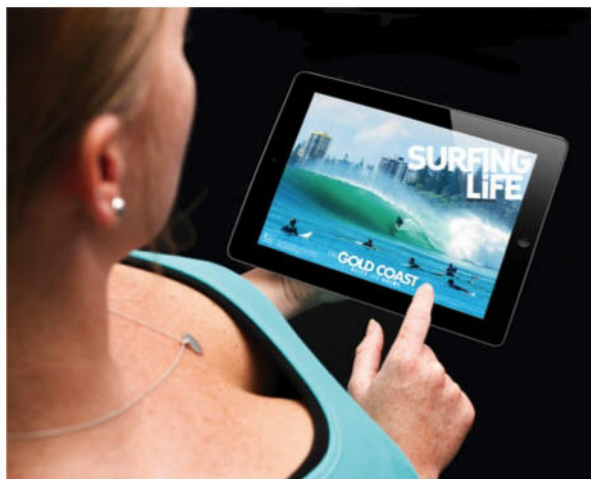
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SURFING LIFE DIGITAL EDITIONS

I know what you're thinking... that it's all fun and games here at Surfing Life towers. That we sit back in our cushy leather chairs, watching surf clips endlessly, planning extravagant and expensive charters to perfect waves, cruising by day and partying by night. But, you know what, it's actually kind of mental! We run on a very precise mix of coffee, bakery treats and the odd head-dip across the road when things get a little too crazy. We're in here early and we're leaving late, pushing out a monthly magazine and then, instead of jumping straight into the next one, we redesign the whole damn thing to fit beautifully on your phone or tablet. Realistically though, the extra effort is worthwhile. These beautiful binary bastards allow us to reach a global market with ease, and if you're reading this from foreign shores on a backlit screen, kudos to you! We hope you dig what we're making in this crazy little backwater we call home. But if you're an Australian holding the print version of Surfing Life, wondering why the hell we'd tell you to ditch it and stick your head back in your laptop/tablet/iPhone, it's all about ease of use, dear readers. We want the print version in your hot little hands whenever we can, but we don't want you to pile up your backpacks and board bags with books and magazines; we'd rather you rip them all out and be able to take another board to your annual Indo jaunt. Just search 'Surfing Life' on the Apple or Google Newsstands or Zinio and you'll never have a boring flight/commute/school period ever again... and all our hard work will be justified! Now, to plan our next surf trip while eating this delicious danish.



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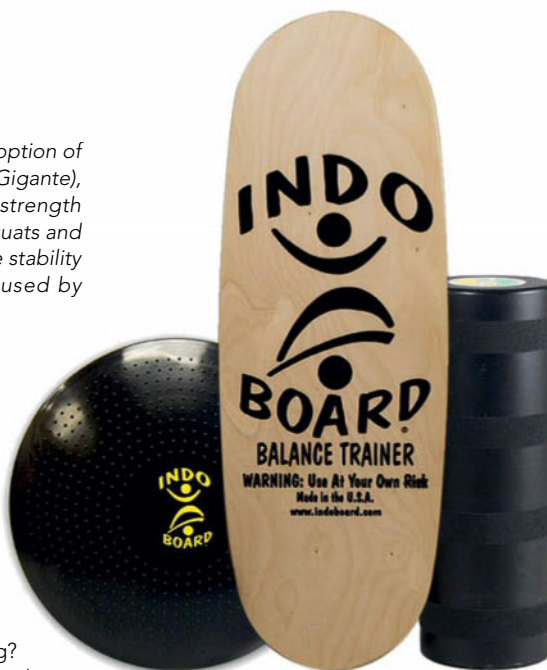
I've always been dubious of the Indo Board. I don't know why, but I always seemed to categorise it in a group of products generally associated with the kind of people that join bongo circles, slack-line on the weekend and have a passing interest in Capoeira.

That is, however, until we received a care package from the good folk at Indo Board at Surfing Life towers and actually had a go on the bloody things. Challenging?

Yep. Embarrassing? Sure. Addictive? Definitely.

Good for your surfing? Indeed. Think about it: if you can't balance on a wooden board and a roller/air cushion on safe and stable land, what good are you going to be on a pointy, fibreglass death-sled in sloping and moving water!? Y'see, it strengthens those tiny, yet incredibly helpful supporting muscles that you never knew you had, as well as building on your already growing muscle memory. You can add to your surfing skill and technique, on dry land. Not to mention that the editorial team at Surfing Life have terrible, terrible knees – partly due to too many years of poorly trying and blowing aials, but mostly due to many years of drunken misadventures – and it's an easy excuse to continue sport-specific rehab. I'm a convert. That said, if you ever see me on a slack-line, punch me square in the face. – RJ

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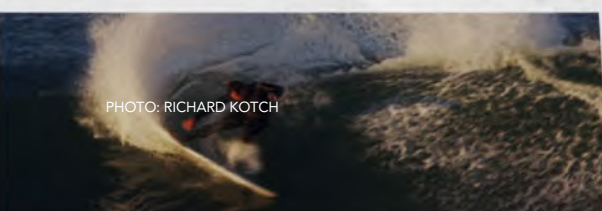
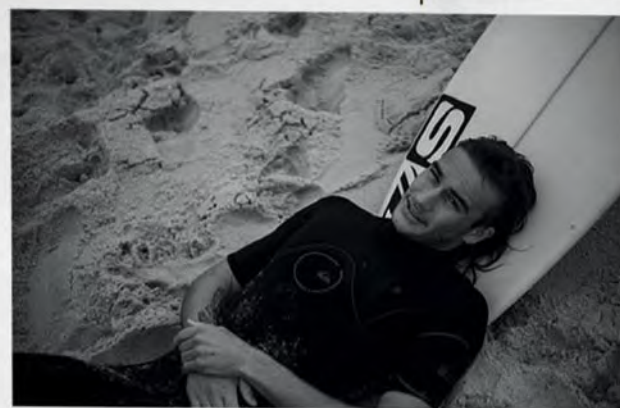


PHOTO: RICHARD KOTCH



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INDO, YOU'RE KILLING US, BUT WE STILL LOVE YA.

That's Australiana done; we started from the centre, now we here. On the edge of the edge, looking over the precipice and wondering to whence we should go. Well, it's time to pack the passport, because SL is going overseas again.

From the fringes and onto where, you may ask. If we were to continue the trend of emanating outward from a central point, then you'd assume that the next stop would be our nearest neighbour. And by Wyan you'd be right, for the next issue is all about the Indonesian islands that we enamour so much.

Indo has been in the news a bit lately, and not entirely for the tastiest reasons. Indo-Australian relationships are stretched on most levels, from the bogan punter to the bogan government – there was even a call for Australians to boycott the archipelago, to which every surfer said, That's a great idea! while frantically searching for the next cheap flight over there.

Indonesia is an indelible part of the Australian surfing experience, and always will be so long as the Indian Ocean keeps on coughing up silken curlers. It's about time that we tried to really comprehend this seeming clusterfuck of cultures,

and understand what makes it tick, so that next time we find ourselves getting keggered off its shores we know what's transpiring upon them.

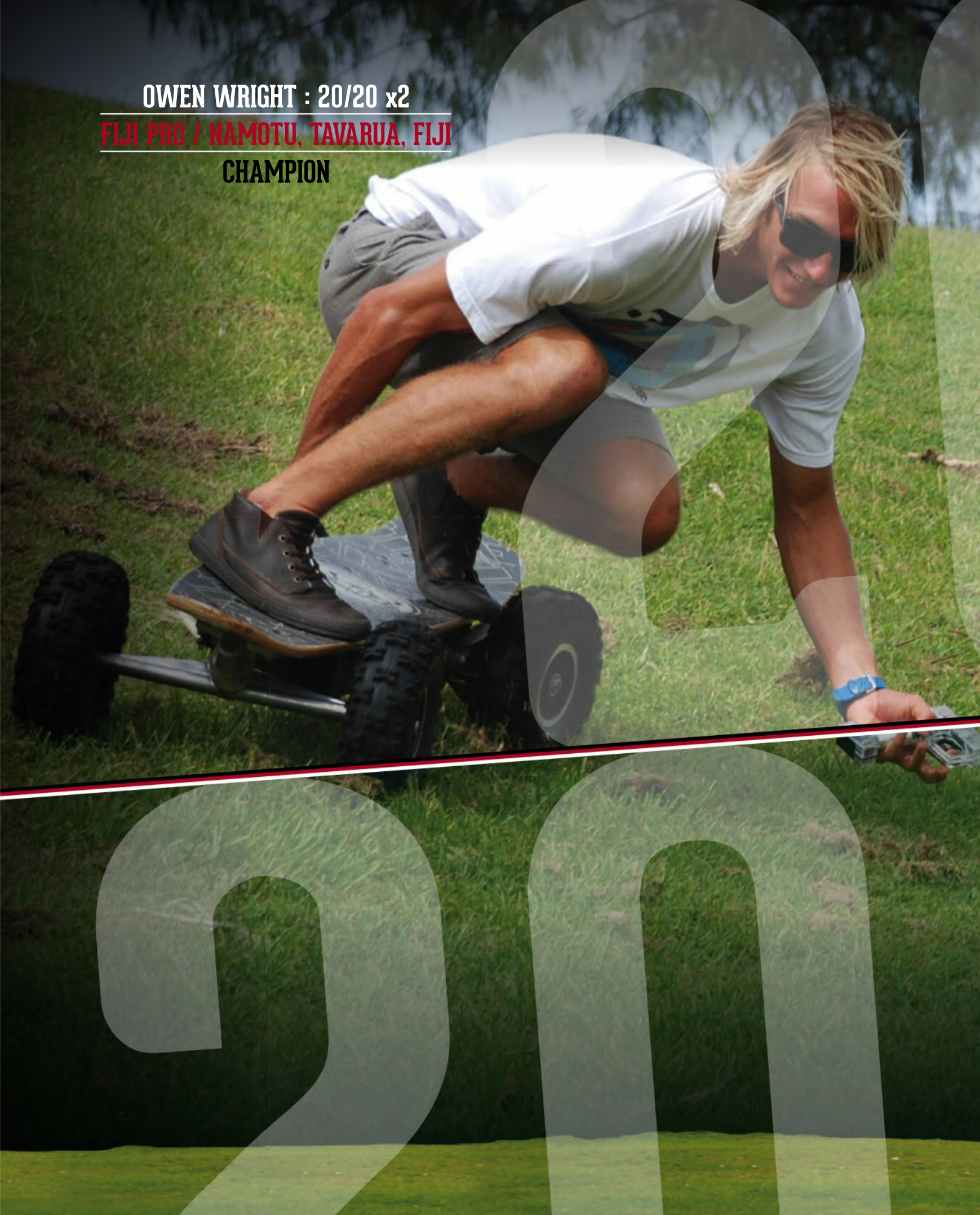
It's fitting that the first magazine after the Australiana series is about most Australian surfers' first overseas shred destination. We're packing the step-up, the reef socks, the long-sleeved white rashie and the bucket hat and making our way to the land of clove cigarettes and overloaded mopeds – and so much more that we're going to tell you about in the next SL, on shelves August 6, a little earlier for all you nasi gorengs who subscribe. 🇮🇩

Yeesh. With setups like this we're pretty sure that even if Aussies were banned from Indonesia, we'd find a way in.
PHOTO: ANDREW SHIELD



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